HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020 SPECIAL

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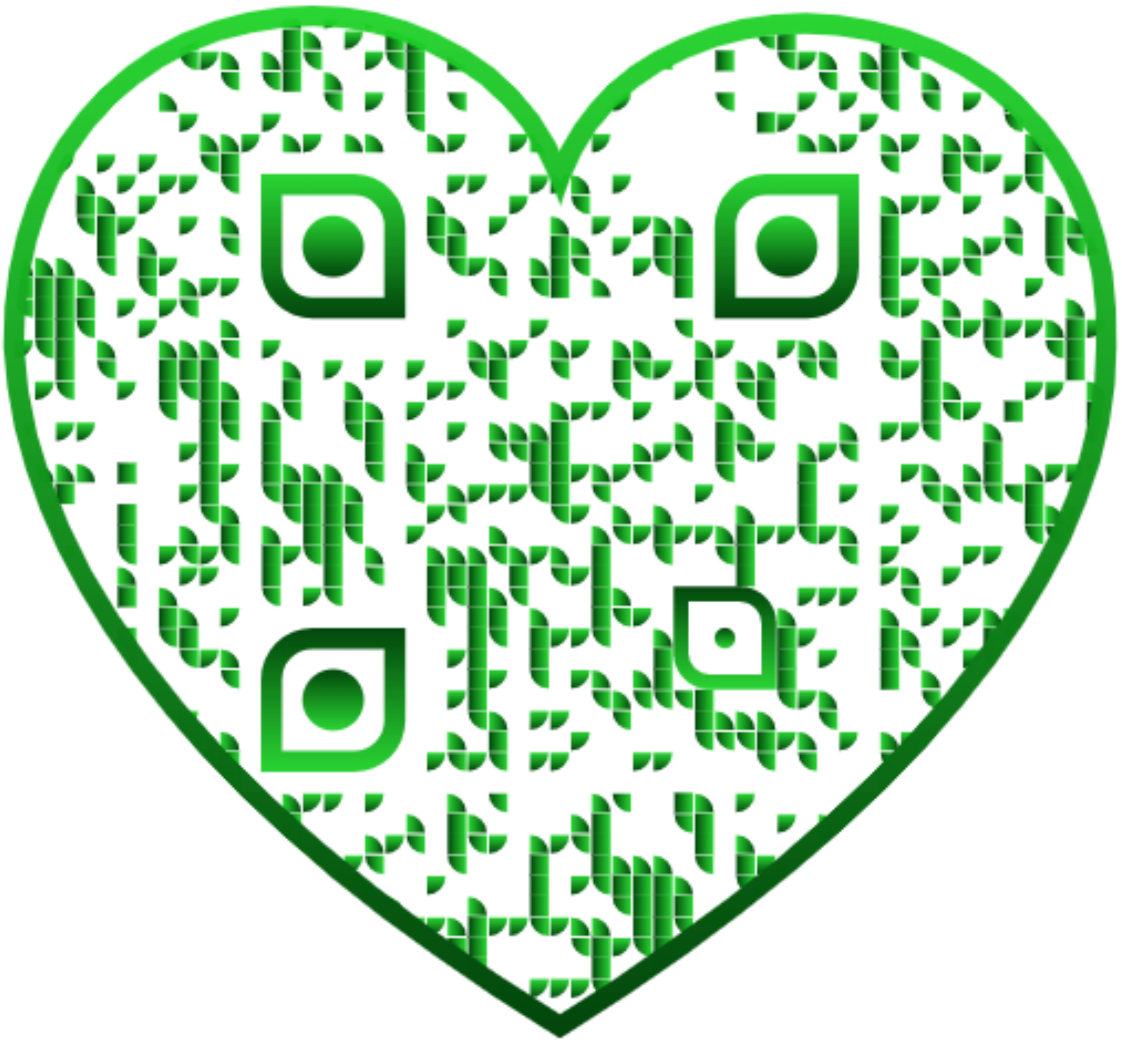

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ISSUE K!1806
JANUARY 11, 2020

Our annual Hottest Bands issue is now in its third year, and is easily one of my favourite things we work on here at Kerrang!. Sure, those enormous world exclusive interviews with the biggest bands on the planet that we've made a staple of K! for decades bring with them a real buzz, but helping to give a leg-up to the superstars of tomorrow always brings with it a certain something extra special. Planning for the list that begins on page 24 began many months ago, when we started asking ourselves, our wider K! family of writers and photographers, industry movers-and-shakers and, crucially, *you* what bands look set to rule the 12 months ahead. Some names you'll know by now; others might be completely fresh to you. Some have albums' worth of material for you to explore; others have a total number of songs to their name that you can count on one hand. But each of them is a name you'll want to remember, we guarantee it...

Enjoy the issue, and see you next week!

SAM COARE, EDITOR

HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020 THE SENSATIONAL POPPY FRONTS UP OUR INDISPENSABLE 24-PAGE GUIDE TO YOUR NEW FAVOURITE BANDS

BRIAN FALLON YOUR FIRST TASTE OF MR GASLIGHT ANTHEM'S NEW MUSIC, IN HIS OWN WORDS

KNOCKED LOOSE THE SONGS THAT SHAPED BRYAN GARRIS, REVEALED

VUKOVI & THE ALBUMS THAT ARE GETTING 2020 OFF TO A VERY LOUD START INDEED

BURY TOMORROW DANI WINTER-BATES THROWS A PRE-XMAS PARTY TO REMEMBER

GIG GUIDE LAMB OF GOD'S MARK MORTON HEADS UP THE WEEK'S ESSENTIAL LIVE SHOWS

FACT! AS WELL AS BEING A GRUNGE LEGEND, FORMER NIRVANA BASSIST KRIST NOVOSELIC IS ALSO AN FAA-CERTIFIED MULTI-ENGINE PILOT.

COVER PHOTO: JONATHAN WEINER

UP CLOSE

WE'LL CARRY ON

MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE return to the stage for first live gig since 2012

On December 20, My Chemical Romance returned to the stage after a whopping seven-year absence. "It's been a long time, Los Angeles," acknowledged frontman Gerard Way during the show, which took place at The Shrine. "Thank you for being here tonight. We didn't know if this was ever gonna happen again, so we really appreciate you showing up." Naturally, the appreciation was mutual, with the 6,000 or so lucky fans in attendance reacting just as you'd expect to the New Jersey heroes' career-spanning 20-song set. And while there's even more gigs to come in 2020 – the band are stopping in Japan, Australia and New Zealand – we still have that all-important question to ask: can we have a UK date, too? *K!*

PHOTO: POONEH GHANA

OLD IRONSIDES

Brian Fallon: "Everyday life can affect people just as much as the big stuff..."

THE BIG STORY

FUTURE HEART

At the end of 2019, BRIAN FALLON unveiled a beautiful new single, YOU HAVE STOLEN MY HEART. And it's a sign of things to come from his third solo LP, LOCAL HONEY…

This time last year, Brian Fallon was gearing up to cross the pond for his Songs From The Hymnal UK tour – a series of stripped-back shows in which the New Jersey musician performed songs from his extensive back-catalogue using just a guitar or piano. He didn't know it at the time, but it would later give him the confidence to attempt a full record of stripped-back, mellow music – a far-cry from his early punk rock days in The Gaslight Anthem.

"I didn't know if that tour was going to work," he tells Kerrang!. "But it seemed like people liked it, and the shows did really well, so I felt like, 'Okay, maybe my audience is accepting of this kind of thing.' I think maybe that tour made me feel like I had *permission*."

Even so, Brian didn't initially set out to specifically write the style of music that now makes up his forthcoming third solo album, Local Honey, due out on March 27 via his own Lesser Known Records – which was launched in partnership with Nashville-based distributor Thirty Tigers. And yet he's thrilled with the results, taking his songwriting skills in stunning new directions with the help of producer Peter Katis. Across the record's eight songs, the musician takes his listeners on a journey of introspection; it's "definitely one for the headphones", as Brian explains. "I would say that all of my music up until this point has been for driving and playing really loud in the car, but this one is like the after-the-show record, when you're like, 'I'm having a night in and I'm gonna sit here and think about stuff.' It's one of those…"

How did you figure out what direction to take Local Honey, Brian?

"I had maybe 12 songs that fit a similar vibe, and then there were a couple that didn't, and I said, 'Well, I can either take the ones that are already here that are more mellow, and I can try to make them louder.' So I did, but every time I took one of these louder songs and moved it into that direction, it would lose something. I would listen back and say, 'That doesn't move me at all.' Then I would take away that stuff and strip it back to just a piano or guitar, and I would say, 'Okay, now I feel that those words make sense.' I read this quote where an author said, 'There's the book that you plan to do, and there's the book that you get – and you just have to do the book that you get.' And that's funny, because that's exactly what happened to me. It was like, 'Well, this has come out of me and I like it, but I don't know if anyone else will!'"

Is there anything on the album that started off more rocky, and then you stripped it back?

"Originally, a couple of songs were pretty loud. 21 Days and I Don't Mind (If I'm With You) were pretty loud, and Lonely For You Only was *mega*-fast! But the lyrics are so important to me – I was writing about things that weren't heroic or anything, they were just about my life – and the faster I made the song, the less it felt like I meant it when I was listening back. I'd listen and go, 'That doesn't sound like I mean it,' so I'd slow it back down and then felt like there was room for it to breathe. Maybe one day when I'm in my 60s I'll release a B-sides record and put the original ones out!"

Is that why the album has eight songs?

"Yeah. I had more, but I didn't feel like that would help at all. I felt that the story I was trying to tell was good. You take a piece of vinyl, put four songs on one side and four on the other, and they tell a story and go together. It's long enough for people to feel like, 'Okay, I've gotten something that I can digest,' but it's also not so long that you feel like you're being hit over the head with it. It was more taking people's time into consideration! I know that I don't have the time to sit down and listen to an hour-and-a-half record, but also, more than that, it was an artistic choice, because anything more than eight songs would have been overwhelming. You can't stay in that space of contemplation for too long. I think that sometimes things go on a bit too long, and you've got to be considerate of that. And it felt like this is more of a compact story, and whatever I was trying to communicate was done in those eight songs."

> **"I DIDN'T REALISE THAT I WAS FEELING ALL THESE THINGS…"**
> BRIAN FALLON

And the story of it is inspired by your life right now?

"For sure. I've been through a lot, and now I'm almost sitting here going, 'This is a lot, so what do I think now? What's happening, and how do I feel about the stuff that's happening right here?' I don't really need to reach into other parts now. I feel like I've done that a lot in the past, and I think I did a pretty good job with that back then."

What was it like figuring out how you were going to do that?

"It wasn't really that easy to say things that

WORDS: EMILY CARTER PHOTO: RYAN JOHNSTON

are about right now, because you sort of feel like they're not that important; when you think about your life and what you do on a daily basis, it's like, 'That's not worth a song.' You usually have to wait until you have this *big* life event. But people's lives are made up of the day-to-day – big events are few and far between. And I think everyday life can affect people just as much as the big stuff."

Did you enjoy that challenge of writing about something a bit more simple?

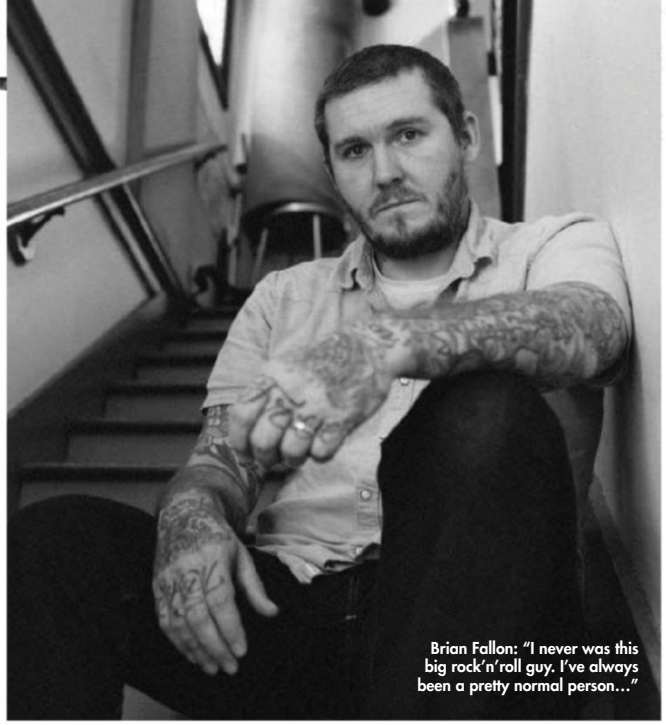
"I don't think I enjoyed it very much while I was doing it! It was really hard (*laughs*). It was hard to boil everything down and be direct. The songs are pretty open, and they're not really hiding much, and that's not easy to do – at least not for me. Sometimes I'll sit down and write in these bursts, so I had to go, 'Well, what are you really *saying*?' I had to chip away until it was what it was."

What was the easiest song to write?

"It was the first song, When You're Ready – it was done in maybe 10 minutes. Those songs don't come very often, and I don't know if that makes them better or worse… most people say the good ones come like that, but I don't really know. But that's when you feel like you're in touch with the divine when that happens! You feel like it's sort of coming through you, and you're just trying to keep up with typing as fast as its coming. It just comes out, and you're so grateful that that's happening, because I struggle so hard with the other ones. Some of them are really difficult, and I can't just churn out songs."

When You're Read_ is about _our daughter. Presumably it was also a very emotional one for you to write, too?

"Yeah, it was. I mean, to tell you the truth, I was crying when I was writing it. It was really hard, and I didn't realise that I felt all those things. It snuck up on me, you know? It had been in me, but I hadn't really said it out loud. It's about my kid, and I don't really talk about that, and I'm still figuring out what it all means, and how to be father. It's not easy, because you want to do it right, but you feel like the world is crazy and it's like, 'How am I going to send you off into this world?!' All that stuff just came out, but it also felt good to get it out, that's for sure."



Brian Fallon: "I never was this big rock'n'roll guy. I've always been a pretty normal person…"

Are you nervous about putting that side of yourself out there?

"I feel really comfortable with it right now, because it's the place that I'm in. I think it's okay to show people this stuff, and I never was this big rock'n'roll guy. I've always been a pretty normal person who's quite introverted but then I'm in a public place. I would keep a lot of that in to stop myself from feeling anxiety about being exposed or on display in any way. But now I feel like maybe my audience is going through some of the same things that I am, and they're probably grown-up, too. The people who've been there for a long time are probably in the same spot as me, and so I'm not really hiding anything!"

Did you attempt anything different, vocally, on this album? There are some surprising falsettos towards the end of You Have Stolen My Heart…

"Well, I stopped smoking a year ago! I haven't smoked cigarettes in a year, and it's been a lot easier to sing since. I didn't know that I could do that, and I just did it one day on the demo; I was just goofing around trying to find a melody, and I was like, 'Oh! That sounds cool.' Then I sent it to my manager, and he was like, 'I didn't know you could do that!' I'm excited about it – and equally shocked (*laughs*)."

On your two previous solo albums, Painkillers and Sleepwalkers, you've had title-tracks, but on Local Honey you don't. Where did that name come from?

"It's funny, because I live near a lot of farms, and down on the beach there's a lot of organic food places where they make their own food, and they get their own honey. I always see signs that say 'local honey'. I started reading about what it was, and it's like a medicine for people, and they use it for all different kinds of things. I was thinking that I'm always away, and I feel like when I come home, the immediate things around me – my family and friends – make me feel better. The title isn't rocket science or anything (*laughs*). I just thought it was cool, and for me, being home is like medicine. All these songs are about this love that you find at home and through your immediate family, so I was just like, 'That sounds like a good title!'"

What was the recording experience like?

"It was really cool. Peter Katis is known for his recording abilities, and making these sounds happen, and creating, like, *movies* in the songs. But I wasn't sure how that would work for me. I was like, 'How do you want to do this, because I'm more traditional?' And he was like, 'Let's just try it.' So I did, and I thought it worked great. It was a real collaborative effort, and for each song, we would make new sounds *just* for that song. You would think some of the things in there are keyboards, and they're not – they're other things that are put through effects. He'll put it through, and it'll come out sounding like something completely different."

How do you think you've changed as a songwriter since Sleepwalkers?

"Oh, man! I think that you learn every time, and I'm constantly in piano and guitar lessons, and listening to music to try and find things that I don't know. I think you grow by trying to apply yourself to learning. You could sort of say, 'Okay, I have a career and I don't need to learn any more.' But then I think that it shows when you're performing and writing. Sometimes people don't change or grow, and that's fine, but I keep looking for more. I always want to see, 'How far can this go?' and, 'What can be done next?' and, 'How can I get better?' I don't know if I *do* get better, but I can try. The pursuit of that is very fulfilling." K!

LOCAL HONEY IS DUE OUT ON MARCH 27 VIA LESSON KNOWN RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS. BRIAN FALLON TOURS THE UK IN MAY – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFO

PHOTO: KELSEY HUNTER AYRES

IN THE KNOW

BRIAN FALLON unveils LESSER KNOWN RECORDS, his new label venture

■ "I had a good time on a major label – they never treated me badly, or made me do anything I didn't want to – and they were cool about me doing this next one by myself. I just felt like, in the major label world, there are these big artists, and you have to *want* to be big – but I don't want to be famous (*laughs*). My interest is to create and have freedom, and to be able to do things that aren't necessarily the most sales-forward. I'm not interested in writing a radio song – I just want to write what I feel. And I don't want everyone else to think that that's a disappointment.

"The people at Thirty Tigers are all so cool, so I didn't feel like there was any other way to go. So many bands are on that label that I admire, so I was just like, 'This seems to be a good scenario, so I'm going to try this.' Would I ever put out albums from other artists? I don't know… This is my first time out, so I'm nervous, but I think I'd be open to it. But I do a lot of the work myself – like making choices on vinyl – and I don't know if I want to do that for somebody else yet!"

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TALKING LOUD

ARTISTS CAN HELP TACKLE ROCK'S GENDER IMBALANCE

Bands need to utilise their influence in order to promote women in music, says SLØTFACE's HALEY SHEA...

"As a band, we're explicitly feminist, and that's mostly because we feel narrowed gender roles are damaging to everybody. They limit what you can do in life, as well as your creativity. Gender imbalance within the music industry is a big problem at the moment, especially within rock, and that's not just in terms of the number of women compared to the number of men working in the industry – there's also a problem with the roles you're assigned to because of your gender. For example, there's a trend for female vocalists and 'female-fronted' bands, but that doesn't mean there's an equal number of women behind the drum kit or running the sound.

"In Norway, where we're from, things are getting better, and I meet a lot of women in the industry when we tour. That said, we recently did a three-and-a-half-week tour, and it felt like for the majority of those shows I was the only woman working. The reality of being a touring rock musician is that most of the people you're going to run into will be men.

"With regards to rock music, I think a lot of the problems in terms of gender imbalance come down to the role models you see; there are obviously amazing female role models, but they're not visible all the time. When I was a teenager, I remember my singing teacher asking which musicians I looked up to, and I was giving examples like Led Zeppelin – I couldn't think of a single woman in music I admired. Now, I can do that, and there's a long list of bands with female members that I think are great.

"One thing that I feel will really help address the industry's gender imbalance is artists realising the power that they have – we do have the ability to influence things like festival line-ups, and we can all ensure that our shows are safe spaces for all genders. It sucks to think about the amount of stories I've heard regarding women getting groped in mosh pits – things don't have to be that way. Ensuring the safety of your fans is a responsibility that we as artists have, but getting it right is something that won't happen overnight. Organisations like Girls Against [girlsagainst.org.uk] and Girls Rock Camp Alliance [girlsrockcampalliance.org] are doing great work around this, as are bands such as Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, PUP and Dream Wife." K!

SORRY FOR THE LATE REPLY IS DUE OUT ON JANUARY 31 VIA PROPELLER RECORDINGS. SLØTFACE WILL TOUR THE UK IN MARCH – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFORMATION

"WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THINGS LIKE FESTIVAL LINE-UPS..."
HALEY SHEA

WORDS: JAKE RICHARDSON

INSTANT EXPERT

AFTER HOURS

With a HAYLEY WILLIAMS solo project on the way this year, we look at the singer's best vocal performances away from PARAMORE – and what it could mean for her own music…

PHOTO: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

1 SET YOUR GOALS' THE FEW THAT REMAIN

'*Whoa, guys, um, is it cool if I get in on this here*?' Hayley politely asks, interrupting California hardcore crew Set Your Goals' 2009 track The Few That Remain. Not only was it a killer surprise at the time, it more than proved the Paramore vocalist has got what it takes to go heavy – and a solo album full of stuff like that would be *ridiculously* cool.

2 B.O.B'S AIRPLANES

On the complete opposite end of the musical spectrum, Hayley's smash 2010 collaboration with B.o.B showed her versatility in the world of hip-hop. And given that an updated version of the song featuring Eminem was later nominated for a GRAMMY, this would be an understandable route to go.

3 AMERICAN FOOTBALL'S UNCOMFORTABLY NUMB

When legends of their respective scenes collide. The Paramore singer's most recent guest spot on the beautiful Uncomfortably Numb in 2019 was a highlight of American Football's LP3, and could well be a sign of what else is to come from Hayley when she goes it alone, given how much she loves the emo genre. Yep, we'd take it.

4 ZEDD'S STAY THE NIGHT

Sure, this one starts off sounding like pretty typical Hayley, but as German-Russian DJ Zedd's EDM-infused 2013 single hits the chorus, it's amazing to hear how well her vocals complement the song's huge dance beats. While a full solo album of this material seems fairly unlikely, Stay The Night still remains a total banger.

5 CHVRCHES' BURY IT

"Any time I've worked on music outside of Paramore, it's always been something I really truly connect with and this time is no different," Hayley said at the time of this 2016 single's release, her voice working brilliantly alongside recent K! cover star Lauren Mayberry's. Could there be more synth-pop goodness to come? You never know…

6 HALFNOISE'S AS U WAVE

After Paramore drummer Zac Farro rejoined the band in February 2017, a month later fans were given a collaboration with Hayley as part of his indie-rock HalfNoise project. And it's not beyond the realms of doubt that the singer could return the favour and recruit Zac's talents for her own solo material. Either way, we can't wait.

PANDORA BY RAY ZELL

RAYZELL.COM

ACCESS ALL AREAS

PUT PENG TO PAPER

Noisy Londoners **PENGSHUI** get set to unleash a "melting pot of sounds" on debut album

Last year was a suitably rowdy one for grime-punk trio PENGSHUi. While making a name for themselves at summer festivals like Download and All Points East, the band also knuckled down to create their debut self-titled album, which arrives next month.

"We are so excited about getting this album out, as it's all of our dreams to be able to melt our favourite genres together," the band tell Kerrang!. "We are super proud of how it turned out."

Still early into their career, PENGSHUi admit that their recording process was "convoluted", due to the fact that they are still finding their feet. Nevertheless, it's a method that has absolutely worked.

"Demos were a wide variety of ideas put together on [bassist] Fatty's narrowboat which got arranged and turned into live versions of themselves," the three-piece continue. "[Drummer] Prav's live drums were recorded at the Rattle Space at London's Tobacco Dock. Dave [aka Illaman] recorded his vocals in various studios around London, and the final parts were all mixed by dubstep/grime producers Ruckspin and Alex Gowers. We hope everyone enjoys the melting pot of sounds we have created."

Your ears are not ready… ***K!***

PENGSHUI'S NEW SELF-TITLED ALBUM IS OUT FEBRUARY 21 VIA MVKA. THE BAND TOUR THE UK WITH KID BOOKIE IN MARCH – SEE THE GIG GUIDE

PHOTOS: PENGSHUI

NEW NOISE

False Advertising: you paid for those yet?

FALSE ADVERTISING

Rising English alt.rockers finding the spark in doing it all for themselves...

Complete artistic expression demands complete artistic control. It's a lesson hard-learned for trio False Advertising.

In thrall of '90s American alt.rock influences like Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins and Pixies, but coming up a generation too late to get caught up in its gravity, they've had to graft for every inch – but they're all the stronger for it. "If you're a new band, you've got to take your future into your own hands," says frontwoman Jen Hingley, who's also a graphic designer for bands like QOTSA and Arctic Monkeys.

> "TAKE YOUR FUTURE IN YOUR OWN HANDS..."
> JEN HINGLEY

Completed by multi-instrumentalist Chris Warr and bassist Josh Sellers, False Advertising are a band able to do everything themselves. Even each other's parts. "Chris and I started the band on the basis that we can switch places," Jen continues. "We can both play guitar; we can both play drums; we can both sing; we can both write songs. We can do everything ourselves. That's extended to production, artwork and videos. We're very keen to have that do-it-yourself, communal ethos about this band. We weren't bubbling beneath the surface waiting for some music industry person to whip us away."

Two EPs saw them hone their sound and wrangle lyrically with topics as heavy and varied as love and loss, politics and grief. For brilliant second album Brainfreeze, they've bent the DIY slightly and signed with Alcopop! and even worked with producer Luke Pickering at legendary studio The Church, stepping around sessions by superstars like Adele, Stormzy and Madonna.

Doesn't that mean surrendering control, though? No. "Our first release, Brainless, was recorded in my dad's garage in a weekend," says Jen. "And it sounded like it was recorded in a garage over a weekend." Thus, collaborating with a producer isn't about handing over responsibility; it's about getting closer to the vibrant picture in the band's own heads. "Ultimately, it's about simplicity," Jen concludes. "Taking something simple – just three instruments – and making them come across in the most exciting, energetic way possible." **KI**

FALSE ADVERTISING'S NEW ALBUM BRAINFREEZE IS OUT NOW VIA ALCOPOP! RECORDS

GET TO KNOW

Your quick guide to FALSE ADVERTISING...

THEY ARE: Grungy noise-pop trio reinvigorating the old school vibe of U.S. alt.rock.
HEAR: The intense energy and big hooks of the band's second album, Brainfreeze.
SEE: The stuttering iconography of the video for Influenza.
MORE INFO: www.facebook.com/falseadv

WORDS: SAM LAW

NOW HEAR THIS

LYDIA NIGHT from the THE REGRETTES on the new music you need to hear

I *love* discovering new bands, and it happens lots of different ways. I get a lot of recommendations from the people around me, or I'll stumble across things on Spotify. Quite often I'll just hear things when we're out on tour. But I love hearing something new, and I'll take it wherever I can find it.

The first band I'd pick is definitely **White Reaper**. They're a huge band for me – I love them, and have loved them since their first album, because as much as I hate using the word 'reviving' they're reviving a lot of the power-pop sound that I really, really love. They're doing something super cool, and they remind me a lot of bands like The Exploding Hearts, The Plimsouls and 20/20. I've never heard a modern band pull that off so well with their own kind of twist.

Next up is **Lauran Hibberd**. She's kind of similar to The Regrettes, and she just opened for us on tour, which was a really great time. She does this poppy, punky rock, and I love that she has such a sense of humour in her music. She's really funny onstage, too. She's brutally honest pretty much all the time, and her song Sugardaddy is particularly hilarious. She takes back a lot of stereotypes about women, and I think that's awesome.

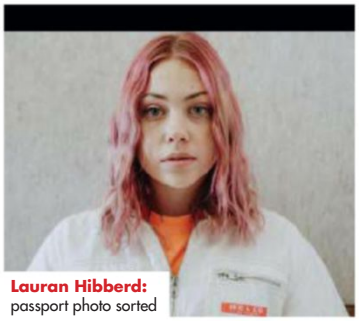
I definitely have to mention **Culture Abuse** here, who are a favourite of mine. They also play kind of a power-pop style of rock similar to White Reaper, in that they have really catchy melodies, and I mean *really* catchy. They write about really interesting topics, too, so it's always worth taking the time to dive into their lyrics. They have a song called Bee Kind To The Bugs, and they talk about the environment in a very non-cheesy way that works really well.

Another great band that everyone should check out is **Liily**, and they're actually our old drummer's band. I've seen them live a lot, and they have this energy when they're onstage that makes watching them a really powerful experience. You can just tell that they all love what they're doing so much, and that's really infectious. They're a harder rock band but who are maybe influenced by Foals or someone, so there's a slight math-rock twist to their music without it being math-rock.

The last band I'd pick are one of my absolute favourite bands right now, and that's **Wallows**, who I discovered when we both played Lollapalooza. They're a band out of Los Angeles who have a lot of different elements in their sound – they definitely have some harder edges and their song Scrawny has a punk vibe going on. They released their debut album last year, and I think it's one of the strongest debuts I've ever heard. They really leave you wanting so much more, having shown you so many sides of what they're capable of, and you have no idea what they're going to do next. K!

THE REGRETTES' ALBUM HOW DO YOU LOVE? IS OUT NOW VIA WARNER BROS.

"WATCHING LIILY LIVE IS A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE..."
LYDIA NIGHT



Lauran Hibberd: passport photo sorted

Culture Abuse: the cheap airline was a bad choice

Liily: "Seriously, when's the Uber getting here?"

KERRANG! ROCK CHART

BRING ME THE HORIZON's new tunes are awesome. No surprises there, TBH...

BMTH: putting their heads together for new ideas

	ARTIST	TITLE	
1	BRING ME THE HORIZON	STEAL SOMETHING	NEW
2	POPPY	TOTTENHAM TUGZ	NEW
3	HOT MILK	CANDY COATED LIE$	▲
4	THE USED	BLOW ME	▼
5	BRIAN FALLON	YOU HAVE STOLEN MY HEART	▼
6	THE ACACIA STRAIN	OUR	NEW
7	OZZY OSBOURNE	STRAIGHT TO HELL	▲
8	BODY COUNT	CARNIVORE	▲
9	DUNE RATS	CRAZY	▼
10	BILLY TALENT	FORGIVENESS I + II	▼
11	EVANESCENCE	THE CHAIN	▲
12	BLOOD YOUTH	PLAYING THE VICTIM	▲
13	FRANK CARTER & THE RATTLESNAKES	NOTHING BREAKS LIKE A HEART	▼
14	LINDEMANN	KNEBEL	▲
15	DREAM STATE	TWENTY LETTERS	↔
16	THE WARRIORS	THE PAINFUL TRUTH	↔
17	CREEPER	BORN COLD	▼
18	HIGHER POWER	LOW SEASON	NEW
19	KIRK WINDSTEIN	DREAM IN MOTION	▼
20	GREEN DAY	FIRE, READY, AIM	▼

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LIFE IS HEAVY

BIRTH. SCHOOL. ROCK. DEATH.

KNOCKED LOOSE vocalist BRYAN GARRIS traces the line from hip-hop to grunge and mainstream rock that has led him to hardcore enlightenment…

THE FIRST SONG THAT I REMEMBER HEARING

READY TO DIE
THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G. (1994)

"Both my parents were really into hip-hop, so I grew up listening to that music. It's very nostalgic for me. This song was a favourite around our house at that time. Hip-hop definitely influenced how I write lyrics. A lot of the words I put down rhyme."

THE SONG THAT REMINDS ME OF MY CHILDHOOD

LONG DAY
MATCHBOX TWENTY (1996)

"Matchbox Twenty are my favourite band, and one of my dad's favourites, too. He travelled a lot for work when I was younger and I have these memories of my mom waking me up in the middle of the night, wrapping me in a car and taking me with her to the airport to pick him up. We'd listen to whatever the newest Matchbox Twenty record was the whole way home. This song is my favourite."

THE FIRST SONG THAT I LEARNED TO PLAY

SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT
NIRVANA (1991)

"Before I sang, I wanted to play guitar, so I got one at the age of 14 and ended up learning how to play this. I was actually already much more into metal and hardcore at that point, and wasn't really into stuff that got played on the radio. But we had a neighbour who knew how to play, so he came over and taught me how to play that riff. He told me to keep practising it to get used to how a guitar works, so I did."

THE SONG THAT GOT ME INTO HARDCORE

DEFEATIST
HATEBREED (2006)

"I feel like I was listening to hardcore before I even knew that there was a difference between it and metal. But I remember seeing the video for this song on MTV's Headbangers Ball when I was about 15 and really liking it. There was a lot of heavy music on that show, but this one stuck out to me. I was really impressionable around that time, so I was into everything that was heavy. This seemed way more aggressive and realistic, though. It wasn't some big scary thing, just a guy yelling about real shit. I could relate. That made me delve deeper into Hatebreed and realise that they were a perfect hardcore band for a good portion of their catalogue."

THE SONG THAT MADE ME WANT TO BE IN A BAND

WHAT WE ONCE CALLED HOME
JOB FOR A COWBOY (2004)

"This was the first song that I tried to sing, or scream, whatever you want to call it. I remember listening to it and goofing off with my friends and then hearing that part in the breakdown where [vocalist Jonny Davy] says '*This is a war!*' I ended up trying to scream that over and over again. It was the first thing I ever tried to scream, and when I realised I was kind of able to it hit me that I might actually be able to do *this*."

THE SONG THAT PICKS ME UP WHEN I'M DOWN

MY BRAIN IS HANGING UPSIDE DOWN (BONZO GOES TO BITBURG)
RAMONES (1986)

"I got into punk rock through entry level bands like the Ramones, Misfits and Descendents during that period of my teens where I was open to hearing anything heavy or aggressive. This one stands out from when I was skating in my teens and would make videos with music on them. You never watched skate videos with metal or hardcore. It was always punk or ska!"

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME WANT TO MOSH

PARLOR TRICKS
ETERNAL SLEEP (2016)

"I don't mosh a lot because I always get hurt, but any time we play with Eternal Sleep I end up moshing. This is my favourite of their songs. They're underrated on record, too, but their live sound is absolutely incredible. It's this wall of sound *crushing* you!"

THE SONG THAT I'M PROUDEST OF

GUIDED BY THE MOON
KNOCKED LOOSE (2019)

"I think this is my best song lyrically. It deals with a lot of personal issues for me. Writing and performing it has been therapeutic. A lot of people have connected with the song, too. I always write things for myself on a personal level, but when people approach me and tell me what it means to them it's an incredibly rewarding feeling and something that I'm very grateful for."

THE SONG WITH MY FAVOURITE LYRIC

IDIOT
EVERY TIME I DIE (2014)

"Every Time I Die singer Keith Buckley is my favourite lyricist. I love the line, '*All I want is for everyone to go to hell / It's the last place I was seen before I lost myself.*' He's someone I've looked up to as a fan for a long time, and now I'm lucky enough to be able to call him my friend and to have worked with him [on 2019's Forget Your Name]."

THE SONG THAT I'D LIKE PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

13 ANGELS STANDING GUARD 'ROUND THE SIDE OF YOUR BED
THEE SILVER MT. ZION MEMORIAL ORCHESTRA (2000)

"They play dark, sad music that sounds like it *should* be played at a funeral. Check them out, but only if you like miserable-sounding, atmospheric background music."

KNOCKED LOOSE'S A DIFFERENT SHADE OF BLUE IS AVAILABLE NOW ON PURE NOISE. CHECK OUT THE BAND'S K! PIT SHOW ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL NOW

WORDS: SAM LAW PHOTO: NAT WOOD

"I DON'T MOSH BECAUSE I ALWAYS GET HURT"

BRYAN GARRIS

Bryan Garris: standing a safe distance away from the violence of the pit

NO-ONE KNOWS...

"I'VE GOT AN INTENSE FEAR OF SPIDERS..."

DINOSAUR PILE-UP's MATT BIGLAND is no good when he's met with eight-legged creatures – or Weezer drummers, apparently...

I WAS A REALLY INTROVERTED KID

"I was incredibly nervous and shy. It's weird for me to look back at photographs of that time, because it brings back those feelings of anxiousness. I was a very timid kid, and I'm still like that to an extent, but I've now realised who I am as a person, and that's really helped me overcome my shyness."

I'M VERY UNACADEMIC

"I struggled in that regard in school, and I'm still like that to this day. I've always been good at stuff like art and design, but I'm terrible on the academic side of things, particularly maths. That, along with the fact that I was rubbish at sport, is probably a big part of the reason I hated school. I always felt on the fringes, and girls never fancied me (*laughs*)."

I'M TERRIFIED OF SPIDERS

"My phobia of them is so intense! It's embarrassing how scared I am, but I've been like that since I was a kid. I remember going into a rural studio with [producer] Tom Dalgety, and I was constantly terrified about there being spiders around me. Heights can make me feel a bit weird, but spiders are definitely the worst."

I GOT RECOGNISED BY TOURISTS AT MY DAY JOB

"I've worked in a lot of cafés, but one of the worst ones was a place in North London – the bosses belittled what I was doing with the band. Around the time we released our second record, Nature Nurture, a bunch of German tourists came into the café, and when I served them, one of them was like, 'Are you Matt from Dinosaur Pile-Up?' My bosses really humiliated me in that situation."

I LOVE HIP-HOP

"When I was younger I was all about rock, but now I listen to loads of stuff. Old school hip-hop is something I'm particularly into, artists like Run-DMC, Dead Prez and The Notorious B.I.G. – I love all that because it's so fun. '80 and '90s pop is another area of music I've got a soft spot for, especially Whitney Houston."

I HAD A WEIRD ENCOUNTER WITH WEEZER

"When we played together at Brixton Academy, their drummer Pat went and sat in our dressing room by mistake, and we walked in and saw him and we were both giving each other this weird 'What are you doing in our dressing room?' look. We didn't want to say anything because he's a legend! Eventually, he was like, 'Oh, shit – this is your room!'"

MY BIGGEST REGRET IS NOT BELIEVING IN MYSELF

"Early on, I should've just got on with things and believed in myself. I wish I could tell the younger Matt that he's got what it takes. Another regret I have is when I went to a party a while ago, I totally embarrassed myself in front of a girl I had a crush on. I often think about that!"

CELEBRITY MANSIONS IS OUT NOW. DINOSAUR PILE-UP HEADLINE LONDON'S O2 KENTISH TOWN FORUM IN APRIL – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFORMATION

WORDS: JAKE RICHARDSON **PHOTO:** THOMAS BROOKER

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COOL STUFF

MUST HAV£S

The only things you need to spend your money on this week…

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£1.84 Teepublic.com

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£29.99 Emp.co.uk

The new Green Day mascot goes on anything. Who'd have thought a rainbow-puking unicorn would be so versatile?
$30 (£22.91) Greenday.com

Yeah, man, Iron Maiden guitar picks. And good news – we've tried them, and they don't only work on songs from the album they're repping.
€4.99 (£4.24) Shop.nuclearblast.de

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£17.47 bit.ly/StarWarsMuralTShirts

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$45 (£34) Waterparks.merchnow.com

Celebrate MCR's return with this snazzy jacket. We hope it's a set of four, where the others say 'Of', 'The' and 'Jedi'…
$149.99 (£114) Mychemicalromance.warnerrecords.com

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KOMMUNITY

YOUR SCENE

Your pics, your art… your *lives*

WINNER!

BACK IN BLACK AND WHITE

Here we have Andy Biersack, drawn by **@wordsjustfade**. We like this a lot, mostly because the eyebrow raise is really spot-on and it looks like he's refusing to laugh at one of our crap jokes. Well done, you've won a Neck Deep swag bag! Email us on Feedback@kerrang.com to claim.

LOOK, IT'S DRAW-EY TAYLOR!

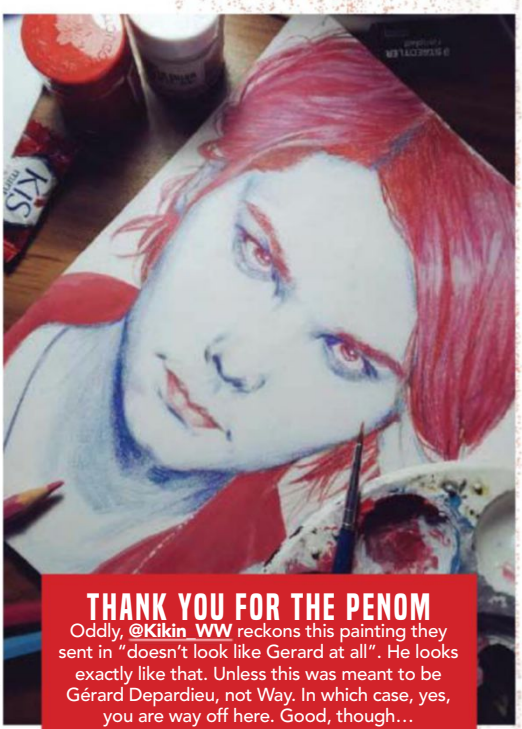
"I think this drawing is okay," is what **@noheterozygous** has to say about this Corey Taylor sketch. It's better than okay, although he's caught his sleeve on your Twitter handle there…

IDKHOW BUT THEY DREW ME

"I have no selfie with my favourite band, but I do paint portraits." Yes you do, **@Blind_Thought_**. Bonus points for not cheating and painting yourself in there, too…

KISS THE PHONE-GOAT

So, **Dominik** "painstakingly recreated the Prequelle album art on my phone only using my finger". Awesome, but you have too much time on your hands…



THANK YOU FOR THE PENOM

Oddly, **@Kikin_WW** reckons this painting they sent in "doesn't look like Gerard at all". He looks exactly like that. Unless this was meant to be Gérard Depardieu, not Way. In which case, yes, you are way off here. Good, though…

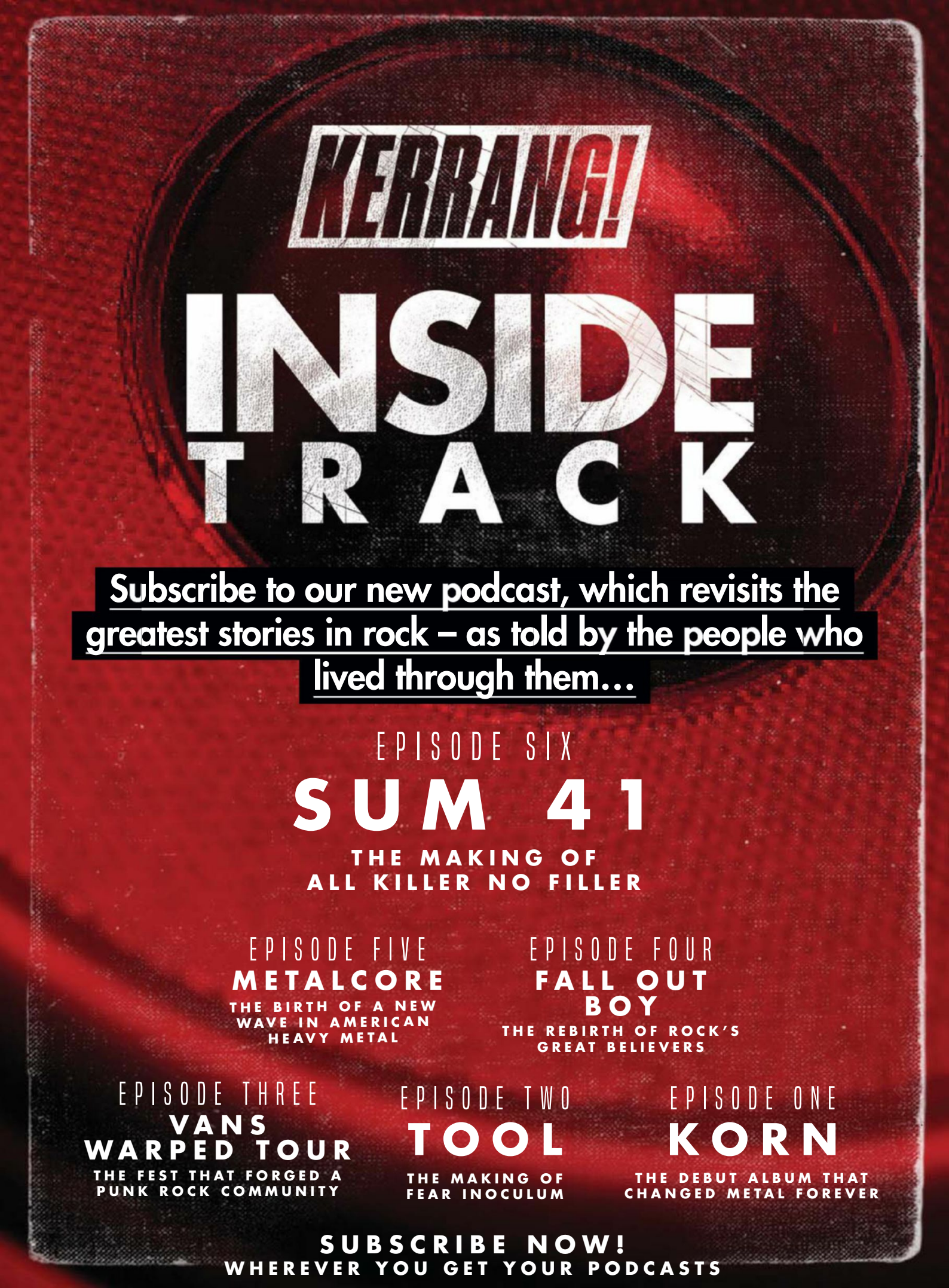
DRIVE TO THE HILLS

Unless you have Eddie painted on the roof of your Mini, you don't like Iron Maiden as much as **@MinxGenie**. True, you can only see it from a helicopter or a ladder, but fuck it, this is still awesome.

NEXT WEEK

WIN A PAIR OF CROSSFAITH TICKETS AND A SWAG BAG!

Crossfaith shows are one of the most fun times you can have watching a band. Fortunately, they've got a UK tour right around the corner in March. If you want to go to a date – and we know you definitely do want to do this – then good news: we've got a pair of tickets to give away. Not only that, we have a load of killer Crossfaith merch and other goodies to throw into the bargain as well. To win this awesome prize, simply tweet us your pics and artwork using #Kommunity, or email them over to us on Feedback@kerrang.com!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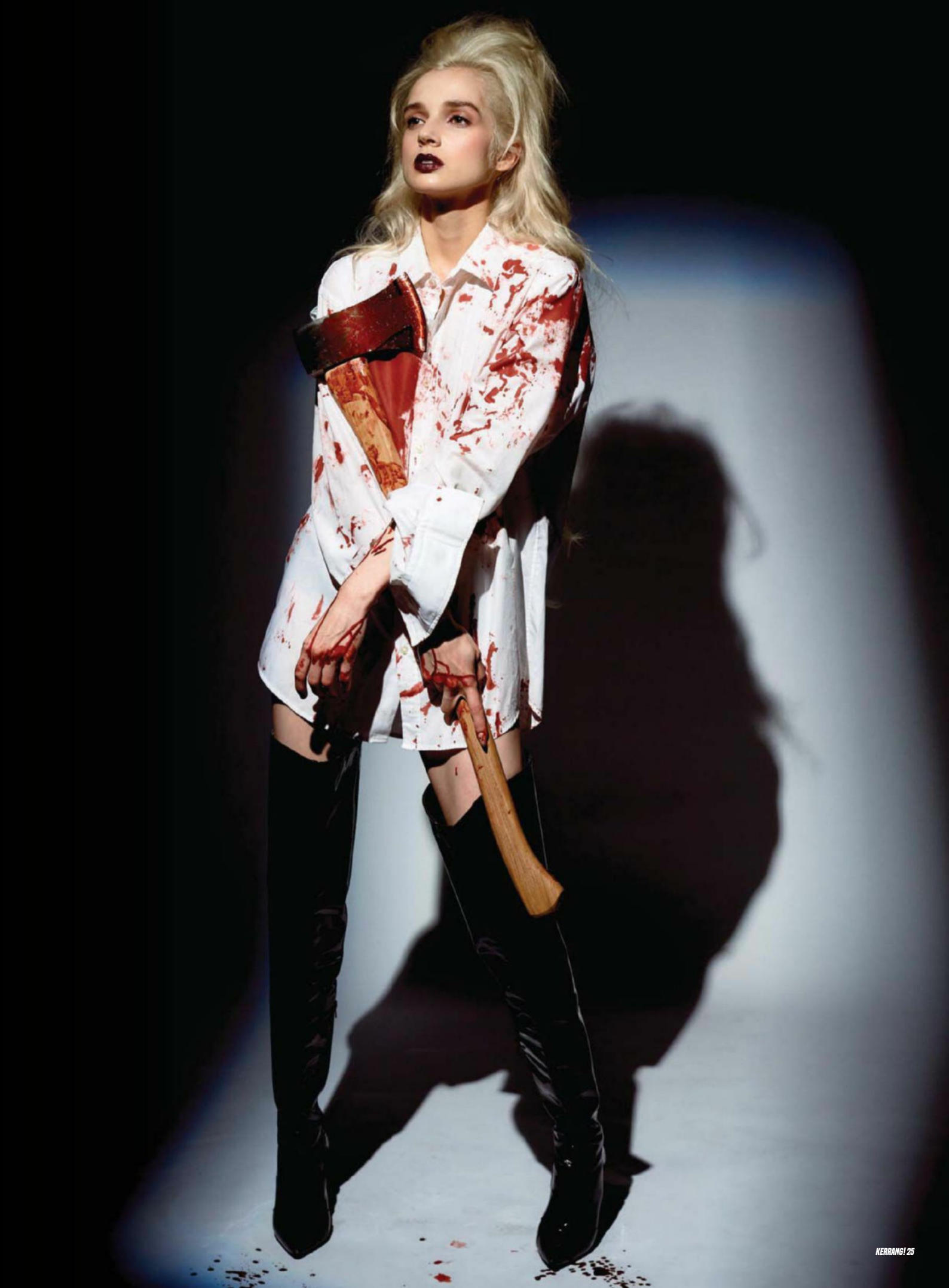
HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020

TRUE BLOOD

New year, new decade, different rules. Welcome to the soundtrack of a new generation, where genre boundaries and the old ways of doing things mean a grand total of fuck all. Over the next 22 pages, meet the bands and artists setting the course for the next 12 months of rock and beyond...



HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020

POPPY

2020 was made for Poppy, and Poppy was made for 2020. Welcome to a world where nothing is quite as it seems…

Absurd, mysterious and highly controversial – you will find many colourful stories about Poppy online. As she herself says, coolly, of such speculation: "There are lots of public contributions that don't always tell the truth." We'll let you plunge into what fans obsessively call the 'Poppyverse' in your own time. Try to make sense of the convoluted nature of all things Poppy, however, and you risk getting sucked into a tangled mess of conspiracy theories.

To say that the vocalist has had an unusual yet meteoric rise would be simplifying things. This is a woman who has been a YouTube celebrity, a fully-fledged pop star, a successful art project, a model and a comic book creator – all before shifting her artistry a little further in 2018 to become a full-blown *rock* star, and one of the most talked-up musical prospects of this year. It's a CV that would make someone in the twilight of their career, let alone in their mid-twenties, feel proud. Yet Moriah Rose Pereira is someone who doesn't want to hide any aspect of her career, her past, or her journey. Every step on the way has been under one artist name – well-considered and all with a careful plan to add to the unique legacy of her project and character.

But who the hell *is* she?

Today, speaking from her home in Los Angeles, she's delighted to make her debut appearance on the cover of a magazine she has coveted as a reader for a long time. "I'm *very* familiar," she says of K!. "All of the Kerrang! covers are very iconic." It is why she has chosen this opportunity to speak candidly and offer a rare peek behind the veil. A character "born on the internet", her explosion into the public consciousness first came via videos that featured a pale, skinny girl with long blonde hair speaking to plants or mannequins in a softly spoken inflection against a white screen. Today, that high-pitched, ASMR voice has been replaced with Moriah's real mid-tone LA drawl. She's fairly inscrutable, but flashes of a surprisingly dark humour demand your attention every minute or so.

Originally, Poppy amassed YouTube followers with videos of her – Moriah – singing. "My videos made their own way, organically, into the hands of record label people, unfortunately. Or fortunately," she laughs, drily. "I'm not sure." She looks back on that time of Poppy as being "me in my purest form. I was innocent and wide-eyed. Over time you get exposed to more things, you become wise and equipped to deal with certain situations. That was before the world dirtied my thoughts and made me question everything…"

Poppy: not available for all your home redecoration needs

"I WAS A LONER. I HAD A LOT OF TIME IN MY OWN HEAD..."
POPPY

One of Poppy's earliest memories is yelling into a microphone. She was sitting comfortably on the floor in her dad's home studio and "screaming" for the sake of "just making noise". As the drummer in a local new wave band, her dad was the person who first made her enamoured with music. For a time, Poppy trained as a dancer, but with Debbie Harry of Blondie and Gwen Stefani of No Doubt on her radar, she always kept a tight focus on her singing.

At 13, after becoming victim to a bad spate of bullying, along with a desire to focus on creative pursuits, she was allowed to be home-schooled. Like her character, Poppy "was pretty much raised on the internet because my program was based online; all the usual classes you have to take. I just locked myself away and finished school two years early, at 16."

In between all of this, she would stay in solitude to create art. "I'd write a lot in that room. I didn't have anyone other than one or two people I'd see occasionally. I liked to lock myself away." That was how she learned to do things like make beats and write lyrics. When she did leave the house, it was only to drive around Nashville, Tennessee in a truck she bought, and take notes of things she saw on her trips. "I was definitely a loner," she says. "I had a lot of time in my own head, observing the world."

Poppy was, and remains, an introvert. She says she took the infamous Myers-Briggs personality test online and found out she was a INTJ-type – analytical problem-solvers with an eye for the opportunity to improve themselves or innovate things around them. They're a very rare type, and the group comprises few women. "The last word stands for 'judging' and that's definitely something I do," Poppy admits. "I don't know if I find myself having a lot of empathy for people."

By the age of 18, her tenacious thinking led Poppy to a record deal. She'd left Tennessee behind to move to Los Angeles to work with Island Records, the home of money-making pop stars like the late Amy Winehouse, Ariana Grande, Post Malone and The Weeknd. "I was young, but old enough to do it by myself," she says, headstrong. "It taught me a lot: the way business runs and how a lot of people are. I was in that scenario for quite a lot longer than

WORDS: HANNAH EWENS PHOTOS: JONATHAN WEINER

Scratching an itch with those nails must be beyond satisfying

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Poppy (vocals).
WHAT: Bubblegum pop meets industrial goth; heavy riffs, twisted synths and the vocals of a corrupted Disney anti-princess.
2020 WILL BE HER YEAR BECAUSE... If genre truly is dead, then Poppy is here to dance all over its grave.
FOR FANS OF: BABYMETAL, Bring Me The Horizon, Marilyn Manson.
CHECK OUT: Latest single Fill The Crown, and its WTF-is-going-on-here video.
MORE INFO: impoppy.com

Poppy reacts to our attempts to establish what genre her music is

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?

Liking POPPY? Then these other nightmare-soundtracking acts should be on your horizon…

JAZMIN BEAN

The terrifying pastel-goth Jazmin draws on Japanese culture and mythological creatures for their look. As for the music, the London-based make-up artist, singer and producer creates catchy goth-metal with bratty pop vocals. Imagine a demented Hello Kitty covering Marilyn Manson.

CHECK OUT: Worldwide Torture

TOOPOOR

With Avril Lavigne and Courtney Love as her childhood idols, the LA-based DJ and social media mogul Toopoor has launched what feels like an inevitable music career, which mixes alternative rock with dark pop and beats that sound akin to those of emo-rap.

CHECK OUT: Crazy Girls

NICOLE DOLLANGANGER

Sought out by pop star Grimes, who created a label purely to release her biggest album to date, Nicole's lo-fi grunge-meets-indie-rock is made special by her poetry book lyrics delivered with an almost whisper, on everything from BDSM to eating disorders.

CHECK OUT: Angels Of Porn (II)

I should have been, and I could've had better people around to help me navigate. I think if you can survive being signed [to a major label], you can survive a lot of things in life."

Does she have any regrets about tying herself to a big pop machine so early in her career?

"In retrospect I wouldn't change anything at all, because I learned so much," she says, "even though it was the most frustrating thing, and it made me question myself, question everything I do and why I do it, and question my sanity."

In those "innocent" days of the original Poppy character, her music was an upbeat strain of J-pop. Still, K! offers, it has a dark undertone to it that forebodes the heavier music to come.

"I think there's real darkness in J-pop and K-pop," she says, seemingly pleased with this observation. "A lot of those acts get signed really young and they're forced to do things by people around them. Like the people who made me think that things were my idea that weren't, just so they could get their way using manipulation. That's very real. I think that's reflected in the first version of the project."

By the close of her second album, 2018's Am I A Girl?, Poppy was beginning the transition to rock. On Play Destroy, a nu-metal pop song she wrote with electro-pop icon Grimes, she threatens in a saccharine voice, '*This is how we play / This is how we play destroy / Manipulate the girls / Indoctrinate the boys.*' The EP that followed, Choke, was heavier still, featuring a collaboration with FEVER 333. On its cover, Poppy is bending over like a broken toy on the white background of her early YouTube videos.

And then came the rebirth and Poppy X. With a fully-formed heavy album completely finished and "tied with a bow", she signed with Sumerian, home to Asking Alexandria and Sleeping With Sirens. The result is industrial music for a new generation: it's dark pop meets Nine Inch Nails, similar in spirit, if not sound, to what BABYMETAL do. Synths collide with nu-metal riffs to create songs to soundtrack Armageddon. There's a lyric from the title-track of the new album, I Disagree, that explains it all: '*Let it all burn down.*' In its video, Poppy is in a boardroom with stuffy record execs in suits and pearls when she grins, dons a diamanté gas mask, and proceeds to burn those around her. "That's acknowledging that's it's okay to start over. Don't be afraid of the unknown and to burn it all down," she says. "That's very much the mood I'm in now."

How strange, then, that Moriah's own life began to mimic the conceptual existence of Poppy the character. "It's a life imitates art, art imitates life kinda thing," she agrees. "After I turned in the album I was like, 'Oh, this is actually about everything that I've been going through for the past year and everything that I'm living.' And I didn't even know that that's what had happened."

When you've got carpentry class in the morning, and a fancy dinner in the evening

"IF I WAS LIVING A PREDICTABLE, SAFE LIFE, I'D BE DISSATISFIED"

POPPY

So here she is, readying for 2020 tours of screaming and dancing in full latex and spikes, with her latest innovation – one that she feels firmly proud of. It's a body of work that is equally as cute as it is threatening. Famous fans in the rock scene are already becoming 'Poppy Seeds' – the name for her fanbase. A few years ago, Marilyn Manson messaged her on Twitter with the intention of connecting with and advising what he saw as a like-minded younger musician. "We've become pretty good friends since," she says. "He's so intelligent. I've learned a lot from him." The themes that the pair obsess over are similar, too: celebrity and media, to name but two. Poppy, after all, was satirising the idea that technology is reducing people's humanity and making them ever more an android-like. She talks on the subject with an intelligent detachment not unlike Manson himself.

"Celebrity and media and technology are a goldmine of inspiration – they're always changing, there's always new faces, new products and ideas. It's fascinating to step back and see how other people react to those things.

"There's a certain amount of time when somebody new comes to LA that they have to figure things out," she continues. "They fall off the bicycle and get back on – passing all these tests along the way – and it's really fascinating to see how different people handle that. Everyone has to fall and get back up. If you haven't fallen, just know that it's coming."

She pauses to laugh.

"And that, I think, is a lot scarier than getting the fall out of the way."

As someone who has fallen multiple times and always re-mounted the proverbial bicycle, Poppy should know. "I had a crash course in a very short amount of time, but I am grateful for it," she admits. "If I was living a predictable and safe life, then I would be very dissatisfied."

Her first proper entrance into the rock world came as recent support for Bring Me The Horizon – a band who, like Poppy, bridge the gap between the alternative and mainstream worlds. Like that band's more recent work, Poppy sees herself as part of a movement of artists working towards a blurring of the lines, freeing themselves of genre classification and restriction.

"A lot of people who have written about the new music have said it's metal and pop, but I think that's because they like the juxtaposition of that," she explains. "I've never said my music is metal, but I do listen to that music. To clarify: post-genre. Or prog rock or pop. We're turning a new page."

Whatever she is, recent years have seen an implosion of subculture, and a loss of the stratification of traditional ideas of genre. Poppy – Version X, at least – is the perfect artist to stand for the evolution of rock in 2020. Who wouldn't be fascinated to see what innovation could unfold in the melting pot? To that, Poppy says, with another evil little laugh, "And we all live in harmony, happily ever after." K!

I DISAGREE IS OUT ON JANUARY 10 VIA SUMERIAN RECORDS. POPPY TOURS THE UK IN MARCH – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFO

WAGE WAR

Get familiar with the rising Florida quintet whose sights are set on an explosive year, installing themselves as metalcore's next heroes…

"You're always going to have those fans who will live and die by your first record," says Wage War frontman Briton Bond on the challenges of being a band trying to spread your wings and grow. "They're resistant to change."

Such is the lot of being a metal band who know they can be something more. Because, while the Florida quintet's first album, 2015's Blueprints, is a masterful work of metalcore muscle, it was on recent third album Pressure, released last August, where Briton and his bandmates really proved their might.

"We always want to show that we're a metal band, but now there's a mix between softer songs and songs full of breakdowns," Briton says. "Our music is no longer the same kind of stuff – we want it to be more like something for everyone."

It wasn't just their music that grew – Briton himself had to grow as a musician in order to nail the album's increased amount of clean singing, compared to the bellowing of old. "I even went to a vocal coach with Cody [Quistad, vocals/guitar] in order to get it right and help ensure that, as a band, we're just doing us and not imitating anyone else," he says of his dedication, adding that, "It all comes down to the fact that having 12 songs of menacing heaviness just doesn't work for us anymore."

When it comes to Briton's desire for Wage War's music to appeal to more than just metalcore fans, Pressure undoubtedly hits the mark. From the huge, arena-rock stylings of the melodic Grave to the thunderous growls of Who I Am, Pressure is an album that spans all facets of heaviness in the band's own way.

"We've grown up and our tastes have

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Briton Bond (vocals), Cody Quistad (vocals, guitar), Seth Blake (guitar), Chris Gaylord (bass), Stephen Kluesener (drums).
WHAT: Florida metalcore quintet determined to prove the genre's appeal beyond its own boundaries.
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE… They're ready to slay it on their debut headline tour of the UK, before showcasing the brilliance of latest LP Pressure on the summer festival circuit.
FOR FANS OF: Architects, Bury Tomorrow, While She Sleeps, Northlane.
CHECK OUT: The soaring melodies of recent single Grave, a modern metalcore ripper.
MORE INFO: wagewarband.com

changed," Briton explains. "We've been wanting to write some pure rock songs for a while. We're all big fans of that world, so we wanted to try it out and prove we could do it. What I feel we ended up with in Pressure was a record that, yes, is a metalcore album, but it isn't your typical heavy LP. Introducing new sounds to the metalcore genre and focussing on writing great songs is our idea of having fun with music. We love the scene we're a part of, but we want to be able to tour with more mainstream bands and be able to appeal to a less heavy crowd."

Put it to Briton that it sounds like he's positioning Wage War as a gateway band that could introduce newcomers to the more extreme acts in metalcore and heavy metal in general, and he's in complete agreement. It turns out, in fact, that gaining such a status is part of the band's grand plan in 2020.

"I'm absolutely on board with that idea," he says. "We're getting lots of new, younger fans coming out to our shows who perhaps wouldn't initially mess with any really heavy bands, so I think it's a good thing that bands like us are making the kind of music you hear on Pressure."

By way of example, he points to the success of the similarly minded I Prevail as heaviness reaching fresh, unsuspecting ears.

"I live in Florida, and I recently saw a guy dressed all in camo, cigarette in his mouth, in a giant, jacked-up truck rocking out to I Prevail, which shows how metalcore is making its way into the ears of people who wouldn't traditionally listen to that style of music," he beams. "With Wage War, we wanna do something like that and to have an appeal that reaches beyond the confines of a scene."

Briton points to live shows and the quality of metalcore's current touring bands like Beartooth and Of Mice & Men as evidence of the genre's increasing crossover success. Citing how this style of music now has a strong presence at festivals like Rock On The Range and Slam Dunk – events that, typically, have headliners with a broad appeal – he argues that the best metalcore bands are capable of appealing to both "the heaviness that Amon Amarth fans love, as well as those who like arena rock". The live prowess of Wage War's particular take on things is something fans will be able to witness when Briton and his bandmates head to the UK for an extensive headline tour starting January 7, with the frontman promising something very special indeed.

"I'm really excited about the UK tour," Briton concludes. "It's our first headline run in Britain, and every time we've played there as support before, more and more people have been coming out, and the crowd energy has always been amazing. I can't imagine what it's gonna be like playing a full 15-song set. We're thinking about playing some songs we usually don't in order to make the shows a real rollercoaster of emotion, and mix up the heaviness with huge sing-alongs. These gigs will all end with a bang, that's for sure." **K!**

"MENACING HEAVINESS DOESN'T WORK FOR US NOW..."

BRITON BOND

WORDS: JAKE RICHARDSON **PHOTO:** XXXXXXX

YOU ME AT SIX

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

INCUBUS

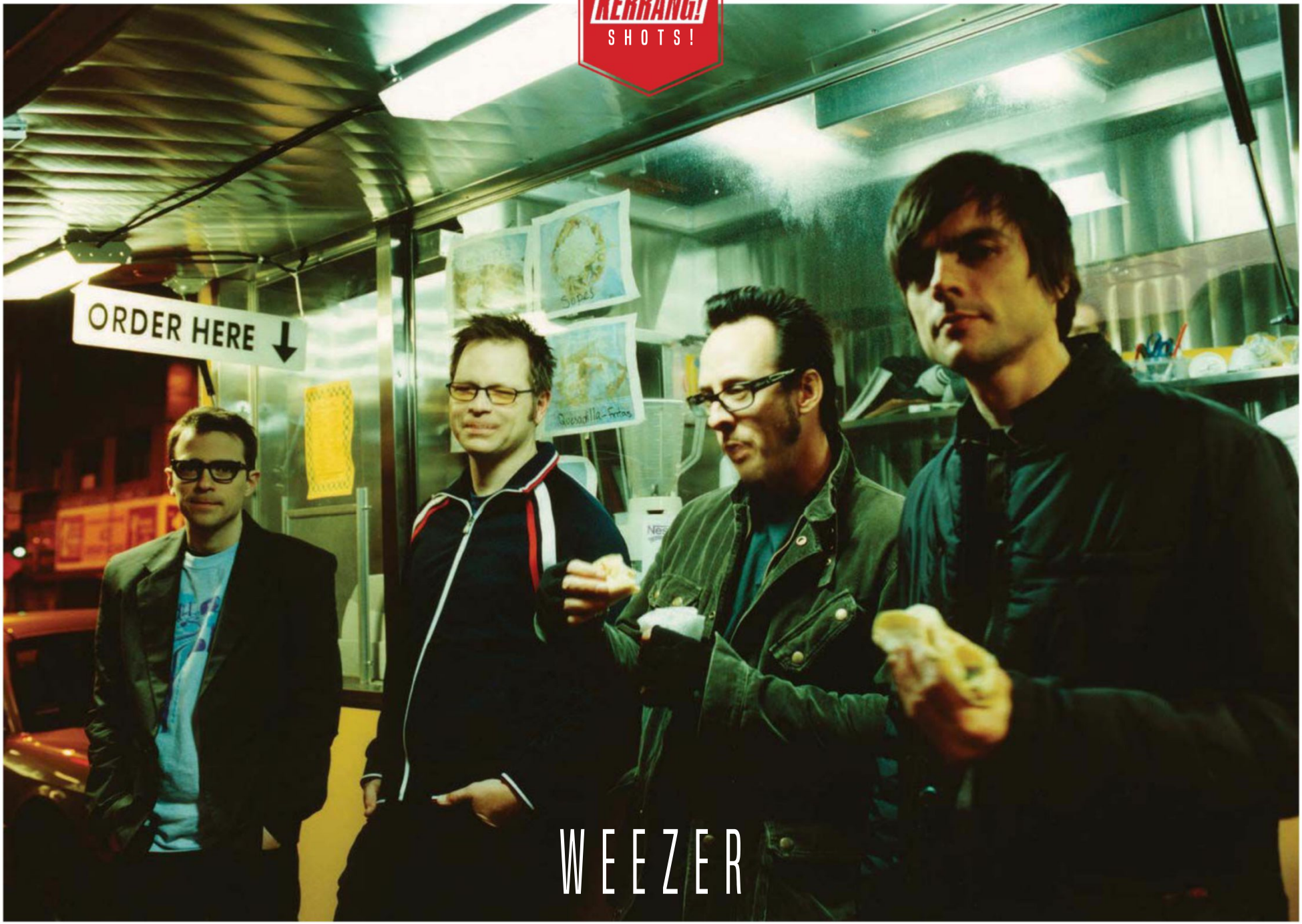
AFI

PHOTO: PAUL HARRIES

MUSE

ALEXISONFIRE

PHOTO: MATT BARNES



WEEZER

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Amy Love (vocals, guitar), Georgia South (bass, wild FX, vocals).
WHAT: Rambunctious and rebellious duo splicing punk attitude with rave rock madness.
2020 WILL BE THEIRS BECAUSE... They're pushing the boundaries of rock music in 2020 and they have the never-say-die determination to overcome any obstacles in their way.
FOR FANS OF: FEVER 333, Black Futures, The Prodigy.
CHECK OUT: The video for Vortex, then dive deep into their colourful world.
MORE INFO: Facebook.com/NovaTwinsMusic

NOVA TWINS

Meet Amy Love and Georgia South: two lifelong friends who are taking on the world with wild rave rock. Just don't ask them to stay in their lane…

As album titles go, Who Are The Girls? is a perfect encapsulation of Nova Twins' attitude: audacious, in your face, and in no way asking for permission. Whether you've already been stunned by their irrepressible live presence when sharing stages with Prophets Of Rage and Skunk Anansie, or you're intrigued by their kaleidoscopic rave-punk, it only takes a few seconds of listening to their upcoming debut album to know exactly what Amy Love and Georgia South are about.

You see, Nova Twins were born to make noise. Raised in Lewisham to musician parents, Georgia was taught how to play piano as a child, before gravitating towards the bigger, badder sounds of the bass at 12 years old. "The piano just wasn't loud enough," grins Georgia. "It didn't give me that heavy energy or experience that I was after. Then I became obsessed with experimenting with the sounds I heard in hip-hop and electronic music."

Essex-born guitarist and singer Amy met her future ally through Georgia's older brother and the pre-Nova Twins duo would practice together as Georgia's dad taught Amy guitar. At college, Amy immersed herself in rock and punk, particularly the multi-genre music of Betty Davis – a fierce '70s musician who is only now getting her dues. "She was a big inspiration. I love the power and the unapologetic nature of her tone and her attitude," explains Amy, who also cites the flamboyancy of the New York Dolls as a key influence. "Together we used to listen to Missy Elliott and N*E*R*D. All of that created something a bit off-centre."

Although the pair were always close, it was only after gigging in different bands that they decided to join forces in 2015. One self-titled EP and several years of honing their hooks on tour later, Who Are The Girls? brings their combustible chemistry into focus with explosive results. There are personal anthems (Vortex), unexpected moments of vulnerability (Ivory Tower) and takedowns levelled at catcallers (Bullet). So impressed was Jason Aalon Butler with the duo's songs when he saw them at Brooklyn's Afropunk festival in 2018, that the FEVER 333 frontman is releasing Who Are The Girls? as the first full-length on his label-of-sorts, 333 Wreckords Crew.

"He called us after Afropunk to say, 'I've seen what you do, I get it and I'm here if you need me,'" recalls Amy. "'Then later [with 333 Wreckords Crew] he said, 'Let's do this.' That was special, because I've never seen an artist open their arms like that and happily share their space with us."

"It's difficult for women; it's especially difficult as women of colour in the rock game," Amy continues, matter-of-factly. "There hasn't really been a big one since Skin, in Skunk Anansie, which is very telling. And they're out there. They're just not shown anywhere, therefore people don't feel like they can do it."

"People have assumed that we must be R&B singers," says Georgia, recounting frustrating gig experiences. "Or maybe they think we're somebody's girlfriend, because they don't believe we could possibly be a band." And they both let out a collective groan recalling an absurd question that is sadly familiar among female musicians: 'Do you write your own songs?'

> **"IT'S DIFFICULT FOR WOMEN OF COLOUR IN ROCK MUSIC"**
> AMY LOVE

Both Amy and Georgia are keen to emphasise that they perceive attitudes to be improving and for every negative comment, there have been many others voicing support. Besides, any naysayers usually shut their mouths once they plug in and let their tunes rip. But what keeps them pushing when things get rough?

"We're lucky to be in this together," smiles Georgia. "Amy is really good at chatting through things if I'm stressed and when she gets onstage she lights up, which is really inspiring."

"I'm an only child, so Georgia really is the sister I used to cry for," says Amy as she stifles an embarrassed laugh. "We're on this journey together. It's a ride or die situation."

It is that unbreakable bond at their core that fuels Nova Twins. Their combined energies and refusal to keep quiet has allowed them to take on anything in their path, whether blasting away doubters or showing around 20,000 French metalheads how to party when they played Hellfest last year. As we speak, they're priming themselves for their February tour – as well as a few international plans they're keeping under wraps. Above all else, they want to perpetuate the feeling of empowerment and inclusion that their music gives them.

"We want to see the punks and hip-hop kids rubbing shoulders. We're starting to see more diversity of race and gender at our shows," Amy enthuses. "We want to spread that message and team up with other musicians. We want to shake things up."

Only a fool would stand in their way. *K!*

WORDS: JAMES MACKINNON

GATECREEPER

From the scorching Arizona badlands comes "stadium death metal". A certain hip-hop superstar is already a devotee…

Home is where the hurt is. Much as Norwegian black metal is a frostbitten reflection of its mountainous Scandinavian surrounds, Gatecreeper's spartan brutality feels like a direct representation of the severe desolation shading the Sonoran Desert they call home.

"It's a definite influence on us," nods vocalist Chase Mason on a rare rainy day in Phoenix, Arizona. Having drawn direct influence for 2016 debut Sonoran Depravation and last year's stunning Deserted, there's no shortage of horrific, Hills Have Eyes style imagery. Chase sees a deeper relevance, too, to the thought process behind these outsider sounds from the fringe of civilisation. "It's an extreme climate. During the summer it gets really hot – so much so that it forces you inside. As a kid, that forces you to use your imagination, whether that's making music or visual art, you need to find these things to entertain yourself."

With age came different distractions, and heroin addiction consumed a chunk of the vocalist's early adulthood. That wretchedness, and the self belief that accompanied getting sober, were pivotal to the formation of Gatecreeper. "I can take that feeling of desperation, that 'junkie hustle' and put it into something positive," says Chase. "Lyrically, I try to mix it up. Sometimes we'll do gory fantasy stuff, sometimes it'll be based on my personal experiences, sometimes I'll find other real life horror stories. And sometimes it's a mixture of them all."

> "THE DESERT IS DEFINITELY AN INFLUENCE…"
> CHASE MASON

Extreme metal diehards have already jumped aboard. Cannibal Corpse bassist Alex Webster turned down a free copy of their first LP – because he already had the record in his car. His band would subsequently take Gatecreeper on tour alongside Texan terrors Power Trip. More intriguing, however, is their infiltration of the metal mainstream. "Our goal is to make death metal memorable," Chase continues. "There's a new wave of old school, but we incorporate a simpler approach, with catchier riffs and more dynamic vocals. It's not just about making the grossest sounding, ugliest music. You've got to have the catchiness of the early Cannibal Corpse records or Deicide's [1995 album] Once Upon The Cross, too."

What Gatecreeper want, then, is to be an everyman death metal band. In that everyone might possibly like them.

"We try to be that blue collar, meat and potatoes death metal," he grins. "We're the band where people will say 'I don't really like death metal, but I'll listen to Gatecreeper.'"

Having performed with 'metal rapper' Ghostemane and counting Post Malone as a fan, the band's mission statement is paying off. And while Chase's tendency to throw around the term "stadium death metal" is "purposefully absurd", the potential is charging up for a breakthrough. So, as their ascent continues, does Chase worry about leaving behind the scene that spawned them?

"Anywhere people want us to play, we'll play," he shrugs with a smile. "There was a certain point where I had to stop caring about the elitist mindset. I love those bands, but I don't care if they think we're lame. We're just gonna do what we love doing. In the long run, creating something for ourselves will be what wins people's respect." *RI*

WORDS: SAM LAW PHOTO: PABLO VIGUERAS

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Chase Mason (vocals), Eric Wagner (guitar), Matt Arrebollo (drums), Sean Mears (bass), Nate Garrett (guitar).
WHAT: Arizona death metallers dragging the harshest of sounds kicking and screaming into the mainstream.
2019 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE… Last year's crushing Deserted album was a beast. And with celebrity fans as varied as Cannibal Corpse and Post Malone, the sky is very much the limit.
FOR FANS OF: Cannibal Corpse, At The Gates, Power Trip.
CHECK OUT: The backwoods brutality of Deserted.
MORE INFO: Facebook.com/gatecreeper

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Olli Appleyard (vocals), Connor Riley (bass), Tom Black (guitar), Sam Kay (drums).
WHAT: Bang up-to-date emotional post-hardcore.
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE: The immediate surge of excitement around just two songs will grow into an explosion.
FOR FANS OF: My Chemical Romance, Alexisonfire, Underoath.
CHECK OUT: First two songs clean. and Adaptive Taste.
MORE INFO: Staticdress.com

HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020

STATIC DRESS

The Leeds-based four-piece have arrived to bring everything you love about emo and post-hardcore into the new decade…

It's an understatement to say that Static Dress have hit the ground running. Rather, they've started with a medal-winning *sprint* that has shocked even the band themselves. The swell of excitement in response to just two tracks, Adaptive Taste and clean., prompted them to perform earlier than planned, with their live debut taking place just a few months ago in the modest surroundings of a Glasgow practice room. A few weeks later, they'd been asked to support Dream State in Manchester and Creeper in London.

Vocalist Olli Appleyard is stunned by the response. They've racked up tens of thousands of streams and views for the clean. video, which appeared in August, followed by Adaptive Taste in November. People have been turning up to shows, and Olli's phone has been ringing hot with supportive messages from America. "It's been really good," he says. "So many friends have come forward for us. On the U.S. side of things, it's been incredible. Collectively, we've had so many people reach out. I had [hip-hop artist] lil aaron come message me, and we're now very good friends with [Prosthetic Records' metalcore hopefuls] Wristmeetrazor."

Static Dress haven't, however, appeared from nowhere. The band – completed by bassist Connor Riley, guitarist Tom Black and drummer Sam Kay – came together in 2018 after Connor moved to Leeds from Manchester. And although only two songs have surfaced thus far, they've been writing intensively and plotting each step, from creating a mailing list to making music videos.

"We wrote a lot of music before we even got close to being what we wanted to be," says Olli. "We could have been three different bands at once. But we all went round to Connor's house one evening, and ended up writing clean.."

Their locked-in chemistry resulted in Adaptive Taste being written just as quickly, spurring the decision to hijack a university recording room and ultimately have both songs produced by Erik Bickerstaffe of fellow rising stars Loathe.

"The process for these songs has been a weird one," says Olli. "We did lots of stuff on analogue gear from the university. And there's lots of stuff on the back end that I ended up recording through my iPod headphones, making noises and sending all these weird little bits into this £10 headset. We ended up mixing it all in, and it somehow worked."

This industriousness applies to everything Static Dress do. Their creative accomplishments might appear to have the backing of major money, but this is a completely DIY affair. He and Sam are childhood friends who started photographing and filming the few visible skateboarders in their boyhood town of Bingley, making an early start on the craftsmanship that now allows them to write and produce so resourcefully for their own band.

"Everything is Sam and I," he says. "We don't have any other people involved. We're filming these videos in my garage. We made clean. on an actual family VHS camera from back in the day. We went through at least six revisions to make the video even usable. It's just going at everything until you're happy."

Independence is important at this early stage so that Static Dress can show what they can do. They've planned a handful of small guerrilla-style shows this month, before joining Canadian hardcore gang Counterparts in February in Europe and the UK. They're entering the studio to record, but Olli prefers to keep all details on the down low for now, teasing that if you pay close attention, you'll be able to find music early.

> **"THIS IS ALL US, NOBODY ELSE IS INVOLVED"**
> OLLI APPLEYARD

"Success is being able to make an impact that people remember, even after you've gone," he says. "That's what matters to me the most – the fact that what you do can change someone for the better, that you're able to provide something they didn't have before. Something they needed – or they might not even have known they needed."

Clearly, it's time to start paying attention. ***K!***

WORDS: KIRAN ACHARYA

HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020

WHITE REAPER

Kentucky goofballs turned actually-quite-serious rock contenders are the retro-tinged, party-jam masters you didn't realise your life needed…

White Reaper know how to make an introduction. The garage rockers from Louisville, Kentucky even proclaimed to be The World's Best American Band once. In fact, that was the title of their second album.

"We wanted it to be the most ridiculous, outlandish statement on the front of our record, just so that people might pick it up," explains singer and guitarist Tony Esposito. "We're goofballs. We thought it was funny."

As first-rate record titles go, White Reaper were on a hot streak. The World's Best American Band in 2017 had followed the band's 2015 debut White Reaper Does It Again. But the joke backfired when people believed the group might actually be serious. It's why their third outing, last year's You Deserve Love, had a more sober moniker.

"I think we got a little sick of people asking, 'Do you actually think you're the world's best American band? That sounds really cocky.' This time we were like, 'Let's avoid that and make it something nice so that nobody calls us cocky and we can be on our way,'" the 26-year-old laughs.

But the fact that some people bought White Reaper's piss-taking messiah complex says a lot. Their feel-good slacker jams, balls out spirit and arena ready melodies make for a semi-throwback style that draws comparisons with the power of the Ramones and the breezy harmonies of Cheap Trick.

"I HOPE OUR SONGS HELP PEOPLE IGNORE THE BULLSHIT IN THEIR LIVES"

TONY ESPOSITO

Still, the group's route to the slick tunes plated up on You Deserve Love has taken in some scenery. Growing up in the southeastern U.S. city that gifted the world Muhammad Ali and Kentucky Fried Chicken, Tony befriended three of his four bandmates in his teens. Twin brothers Nick and Sam Wilkerson (drums and bass, respectively) he knew from school, while keyboardist Ryan Halter he'd met playing in a church band. The group went through five or six iterations inspired by acts like LA cult punks the Germs (those '70s comparisons are no coincidence) but also the modern sharpness of My Chemical Romance, while being buoyed by Louisville's supportive scene.

"We were super lucky. There was this all-ages venue in town called Skull Alley," says the singer. "It was around for six years while we were in high school. So it was kind of miracle timing. It meant that we met all kinds of other kids."

Having promised their parents that they wouldn't tour before graduation, they idled down their homeland's East Coast once diplomas were in hand and were soon making ventures out West. "Things haven't really stopped since," adds Tony.

It was a few years ago at South By Southwest that they met Hunter Thompson, a friend of a friend who had let them crash at his house for the festival. The Austin native struck up a fast bond with the group and was soon asked to join as their second guitarist. It makes You Deserve Love White Reaper's first music to feature the lush textures and fun-loving harmonies of their dual guitar set-up. It's a relationship that also gave us the album's title-track. "[It's] loosely based upon our relationship with Hunter and whether he would join the band or not. It was a hopeful tune that he would," Tony explains.

In truth, that track sticks out for its positivity in White Reaper's catalogue, with the frontman laughing that most of his ideas get pretty dark. You Deserve Love is certainly home to yarns dealing in hard luck and hard love. Ring, for example, is about running into an ex that's moved on. While 1F, named after a Cincinnati freeway exit, tells a story about starting a relationship with a widow whose husband used to collect classic cars. But far from feeling gloomy, these are undoubtedly soulful, all-American tunes made for singing on open highways and at kicking-out time at the bar.

"I hope that our songs help people ignore whatever other bullshit is going on in their life," says Tony.

People are taking notice, too. The band will join Pearl Jam and Pixies on their super-sized Euro tour this summer. If it's a sign of things to come, the singer's keeping a cool head with his ambitions.

"We want to see how far we can take it," he says. "We really don't know what's obtainable for our band, but we'd all like to find out…" K

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Tony Esposito (vocals, guitar), Hunter Thompson (guitar), Ryan Hater (keys), Nick Wilkerson (drums), Sam Wilkerson (bass).
WHAT: Shitkicking power-pop that has the cool-guy grooves to remind you why you fell in love with guitar music in the first pace.
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE: Hot off the heels of their third and strongest album, You Deserve Love, the five-piece will be heading out to Europe with Pearl Jam and Pixies.
FOR FANS OF: Thin Lizzy, Cheap Trick, FIDLAR, Beach Slang.
CHECK OUT: The colourful video for the infectious Might Be Right.
More info: whitereaperusa.com

WORDS: TOM SHEPHERD **PHOTOS:** ROD LOUD

WARGASM

Riot grrrl meets nu-metal – sounds like a recipe for disaster, right? Not according to this spiky punk duo…

Riot grrrl and nu-metal might not seem the most compatible of genre mash-ups, but in the case of London-based newcomers Wargasm, the bridging of a socially conscious outlook and party-starting fever is working wonders. Formed by ex-Dead! guitarist Sam Matlock and his friend, vocalist/bassist Milkie Way, the punk duo are out to spread a positive message while having a bloody great time doing it.

"When my old band broke up, the first thing I wanted to do was explore the riot grrrl sound," Sam, who sings alongside Milkie in Wargasm, begins. "I was looking for someone with that same passion to form a multi-gender project with me. I hit up Milkie, who I knew through her work as [music photographer] Girl In The Pit, and we started writing and began to formulate a sound. Much of our style was born out of how, when you're listening to music and it's 3am, everyone is always trying to play something 'better', but the best thing to do is stick fucking Break Stuff by Limp Bizkit on. That was the real spark for us. People are afraid to admit they love those cheesy bangers, but when they come on, rooms go mental and everyone knows the words. We wanted to utilise that feeling in our own music."

Pointing to how bands like SHVPES, Loathe and even this issue's cover star Poppy have incorporated nu-metal tropes successfully into their recent output, there's a determination within Sam and Milkie to ensure that Wargasm craft songs that are, above all, fun.

"We've written about the Kardashians and Terminator. There's pop culture references all over our music," Milkie says of the band's lyrics. "A lot of bands in the rock scene take themselves far too seriously. We wanna bring some good times and humour back."

"We write a lot of stuff about this golden age of technology we're currently in," Sam adds. "Social disconnection is a big thing. Some of our music is about embracing technology *and* rebelling against it."

Despite the fun they're having, there's evidently a more serious side to Wargasm. In order to take that message to the masses, the band have crafted a plan for 2020 that revolves around releasing more singles, rather than jumping straight into the album format. Milkie argues that streaming has "given this generation of musicians a lot of creative freedom, which allows you to drop tracks, have fun and gives you time to develop as artists."

Moreover, there's big things coming on the live front, including an appearance at Download Festival in June.

"We're gonna blow the fuck off that tent!" Sam enthuses. But when it comes to live shows, Wargasm's main goal is to see young female fans have a great time.

"I grew up in Northern Ireland and didn't get to go to Download as a teenager, so I'm super-excited to share such a special experience with so many people," says Milkie. "The main thing I wanna see is a fuckload of girls in the pit going hard and having a good time in a safe environment. Witnessing that from the stage would mean the world to me." ***K!***

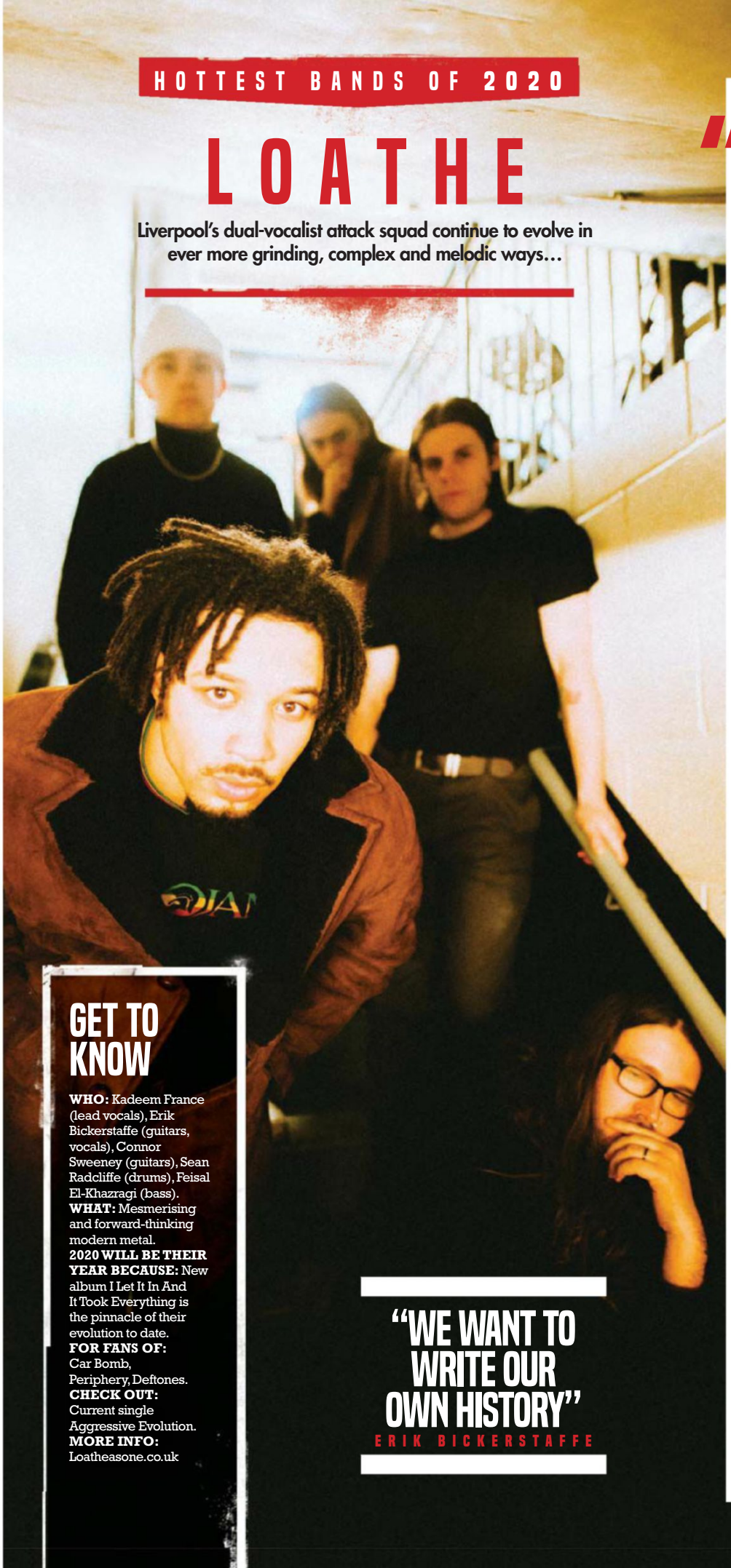
WORDS: JAKE RICHARDSON

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Sam Matlock (vocals, guitar), Milkie Way (vocals, bass).
WHAT: A brand new punk band taking influence from the riot grrl and nu-metal scenes who are, in their words, "making angry songs for sad people."
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE… They've landed a slot at Download off the back of two singles, and there's more coming over the next 12 months.
FOR FANS OF: Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Fangclub, Marmozets, FEVER 333.
CHECK OUT: Rampant single God Of War, which is equally as sultry as it is savage.
MORE INFO: wargasm.online

LOATHE

Liverpool's dual-vocalist attack squad continue to evolve in ever more grinding, complex and melodic ways…



GET TO KNOW

WHO: Kadeem France (lead vocals), Erik Bickerstaffe (guitars, vocals), Connor Sweeney (guitars), Sean Radcliffe (drums), Feisal El-Khazragi (bass).
WHAT: Mesmerising and forward-thinking modern metal.
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE: New album I Let It In And It Took Everything is the pinnacle of their evolution to date.
FOR FANS OF: Car Bomb, Periphery, Deftones.
CHECK OUT: Current single Aggressive Evolution.
MORE INFO: Loatheasone.co.uk

"WE WANT TO WRITE OUR OWN HISTORY"
ERIK BICKERSTAFFE

"I feel like a lot of people want something different," says Erik Bickerstaffe, co-vocalist and guitarist with Liverpool five-piece Loathe. "There's been a merge between the aesthetic and aggressive tendencies of metal with hip-hop and the more mainstream pop world. I'm not sure why that's happened, but I love it, because it's definitely given new life to the style of music we're involved in."

It's almost impossible to pin down precisely which style of music Loathe *are* involved in, given that their debut album The Cold Sun announced the arrival of an ultra-modern, supremely heavy sound that matches pummelling, technical riffs cut with sudden changes between vocalist Kadeem France's savage growl and Erik's own gentle passages. New album I Let It In And It Took Everything only intensifies the variety, standing not just as Loathe's finest accomplishment but as a unique combination of melody and fire-in-the-eyes madness.

"I don't think we've ever worked as hard or as long," says Erik. "And I'm hoping that it shows. We've come together as a collective even more so than before. It sparked a new energy within us. It feels as though we've got momentum back, but it's a different kind of energy."

The most important thing to have happened to the group in the past 12 months is writing and completing the record, refining their assault in a process which saw them lay down tracks in an array of UK studios while also enduring an insanity-inducing stint in a cottage in the Welsh valleys. Despite the cabin fever, Kadeem says that in writing songs like Aggressive Evolution or Gored they've experienced new levels of creativity.

"Finishing I Let It In… after working on it for so long is the highlight of my year, if not my *life*," he says. "When we announced it, I had a very complex mixture of emotions, but they were all overwhelmed by pride. I'm extremely proud of everyone in the band."

They may be a band that have been operational since 2014, but they now find themselves in an even richer realm of ambition. Kadeem explains that when they gathered for a fortnight at bassist Feisal's place in Cardiff, they committed to making I Let It In… as magnificently heavy as possible. "We were like, right, from here on out it's no holds barred, man."

And without getting too carried away, they talk of narratives in songs like New Faces In The Dark, structured as in films like Crash or Pulp Fiction where different stories connect and converge. "I Let It In… is more of a collection," says Erik. "We tried to incorporate more of an anthology vibe: connected stories within the same universe, but not necessarily with a definitive ending. It's hard to describe what's happening without saying 'the human condition', but they're about interactions on a bit of an extended level.

"We want to spread the music and the message to as many places possible," says Kadeem. "And beyond. There's no ceiling."

"We want to write our own history," says Erik. "We won't defer to *anyone*." **K!**

WORDS: KIRAN ACHARYA

HIGHER POWER

From DIY endeavours to dreaming of the biggest stages, this Leeds gang are gearing up for a global assault in 2020…

Life is an ever-turning wheel. Refreshment and reinvention are pivotal to health and survival within that – something Higher Power frontman Jimmy Wizard can see parallels with in the current hardcore resurgence. It's a theme explored on upcoming second LP 27 Miles Underwater.

"It's based on the seven-year-cycle theory," Jimmy elucidates. "It posits that every seven years we essentially become new people. In that window, every cell in your body has been replaced by a new cell." In processing that mind-bending biological truth, there are crucial ties to the past. Most obviously, it's in the Leeds quintet's patented sound and aesthetic, with '90s heroes like Life Of Agony, Leeway and Snapcase looming large. Mine deeper, though, and you'll find the cumulative sum of every moment leading to this point.

Growing up on an isolated housing estate in the shadow of Her Majesty's Prison Aylesbury (an area the frontman playfully refers to as "the hillbilly side of England"), Jimmy and his brother Alex – Higher Power's drummer – were starved of any meaningful creative outlet. Without other kids around, the frontman developed introspective tendencies that have come to serve him well as a songwriter. Despite his band's moniker, he is not a religious individual, but is fascinated by the grand cosmic machinations of the universe around us.

A move north would change everything. After years spent hopping couches around London, the concentrated scene and lower cost of living precipitated relocation to Leeds. With an active underground and vibrant events like GhostFest and Outbreak, opportunities and ideas took hold. It was only when Alex followed Jimmy up the M1 and – despite the brothers never having played together before – acknowledged a mutual desire to explore melodic hardcore that the spark caught. Outfits like Turnstile and Code Orange had broken down barriers. Anything was achievable. "It was like, 'It's time,'" Jimmy laughs. "'Let's make some magic together!'"

Things snowballed fast. Guitarist Louis Hardy jumped aboard. A handful of songs were written and demoed. Good friend Ethan Wilkinson learned bass so that he could join the band. ("He turned up at my house, having learned the whole demo.") Max Harper of their then-label Neutral Words Records, came in as a second six-stringer. The subsequent Space To Breathe EP triggered a hype explosion.

"Our first ever tour as a band was in America," Jimmy laughs at the absurdity. "United Blood Fest in America hit us up. We told them we'd only been a band for a year and had a five song set! Then [Angel Du$t/Trapped Under Ice mainman] Justice Tripp arranged a whole tour around that."

2017 debut Soul Structure and a slew of tours with the likes of Every Time I Die and Knocked Loose ensued. Jimmy pinpoints their jaunt with Suffolk alt.rockers Basement as a lightning bolt moment. "[Frontman] Andrew Fisher hit me up. It was like, 'Damn!' Then we realised how much sense it made. It wasn't Basement with some hardcore band. It was just a fucking cool tour.

> **"WE'RE TAKING A LOT OF RISKS DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING"**
> JIMMY WIZARD

"I wouldn't even say that Higher Power is a hardcore band. But we've definitely got that sensibility. It's very DIY. We're all hardcore kids and we owe everything to that world, but we didn't want to do what every other hardcore band does. We wanted to write the music that we wanted to hear."

So, why have seasoned peers within the scene responded so overwhelmingly?

"We're taking a lot of risks coming from where we're coming from and making the sounds that we do. I think other bands like to see musicians pushing it like that, because they understand how scary it can be and how wrong it can go. I think that's why they give a shit."

Gouging sacrifices have been made. "I was in a long-term relationship," Jimmy reflects. "I was working in a tattoo shop. I could have had a nice comfortable life, but I knew I had to leave. Everyone has lost their jobs, or just quit, hoping this works out. These are the sacrifices that you have to make.

"Higher Power is what I've always wanted to do, but I never had the confidence and motivation before. Now, it feels like everything is falling into place. We're hyper-focussed."

With great risk, though, comes great reward.

"Anything can happen," Jimmy reckons. "All these 'headliner' bands are coming to an end – Slayer just broke up! New acts have to stake their claim. It's a big dream, but who's to say anything's impossible?" ***K!***

WORDS: SAM LAW **PHOTOS:** NAT WOOD

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Jimmy Wizard (vocals), Alex Wizard (drums), Louis Hardy (guitar), Ethan Wilkinson (bass), Max Harper (guitar).
WHAT: Boundary-busting Leeds melodic hardcore quintet bringing the '90s vibes bang up to date with a vibrant modern verve.
2019 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE... After a whirlwind four years playing support to hardcore's biggest hitters, the Leeds quintet have signed with industry behemoth Roadrunner Records and are ready to shoot for stardom.
FOR FANS OF: Turnstile, Life Of Agony, Leeway.
CHECK OUT: Second LP 27 Miles Underwater:
MORE INFO: Facebook.com/higherpowerleeds

HOT MILK

From a drunken night of songwriting to soundtracking a Foo Fighter's car journey, this Manchester quartet are already off to a flying start…

This time last year, Hot Milk had just been chucked in at the deep end. The Manchester-based quartet were in Antwerp, at the Belgian city's industrial Kavka Zappa venue, a room that can squeeze in around 1,000 music fans, where they were preparing for night one of a European tour opening for You Me At Six. This was a big deal. It was also the first gig they had ever played together.

"Holy shit, I hope we can play these [venues]," is what singer/guitarist Hannah Mee remembers going through her head that night. But it was a moment that would soon be eclipsed in a whirlwind year. Dates with Deaf Havana, Papa Roach and Foo Fighters would follow (Foos guitarist Pat Smear would ask for their CD to listen to while he does the school run). Meanwhile, the fields of Slam Dunk, Download and Reading and Leeds festivals would also welcome the band that hadn't existed a year earlier.

You only have to look to Hot Milk's debut EP, Are You Feeling Alive?, released last May, to understand why things were happening so fast. Neon bright and loaded with calorific hooks, their genre-fluid style not only showed off their impressive songwriting skills, but in their treatment of things like mental health and personal worth, they proved that they already knew exactly what kind of band they wanted to be.

"We want to empower people," says Hannah. "We always say: if you come to see this band, you come as you are. You're welcome, regardless of gender, regardless of if you want to kiss boys, kiss girls, kiss anybody, whatever. We just want to create a welcoming atmosphere where people can meet new people and support and celebrate themselves."

The band's journey started in 2018, when Hannah and her housemate James Shaw, who shares vocal and guitar duties, got drunk together one night and tried to write a song.

"IF YOUR'RE NOT USING MUSIC TO SAY SOMETHING, WHAT'S THE POINT?"

HANNAH MEE

Both had spent years playing in multiple bands that hadn't lasted, and had found themselves working in Manchester's local music scene – Hannah as a promoter, James as a lighting director – but there was still a creative itch that wasn't getting seen to. "All the work we did regarding music was always like the B-side of not being able to play in a band," says James.

After their wine-fuelled writing session produced the breezy pop-punk of Take Your Jacket, the pair decided to keep going and wrote four more tunes. Unsure if what they'd done was any good, they then shipped them off anonymously to people that they knew within the music industry. What came back was a wave of positivity, with the pair eventually landing a management deal and facing the very real prospect that, finally, their music might pay off. Adopting bassist Tom Paton and drummer Harry Deller – friends from the local scene – they prepared to play their songs in places beyond their bedrooms.

Since then, Hot Milk have continued to write. The plan is to have new music out this year, but for now the band don't see the need to tie themselves down to any one kind of format or sound.

"It's a melting pot of different influences," says Hannah, who grew up listening to punk bands like Operation Ivy and Green Day. "There is no genre for Hot Milk because every single song is different. If we ever do a full-length, then I think people are going to be very shocked by the diversity on that record. Because, at the end of the day, if a song's good, then a song's good."

"We've said this since day one: genre is a lie," adds James, explaining their musical stance. "Nobody wants to confine themselves to one genre."

While genre may be something that's as variable as the weather, what does seem settled is the pair's desire to up the political edge to Hot Milk's music. It's a change already noticeable in the band's recent single Candy Coated Lie$, which trades the personal angst of their first EP for a sharper, more outward-looking attack on those in power and authority. It's something that the group felt they simply couldn't ignore, given their generation's current disillusionment with society.

"I did a degree in politics, and I feel like it would be wrong for me to write a love song right now," explains Hannah. "I'm not saying there's not going to be some kind of element of that somewhere, but I think if we've got a platform then it's our duty to say something. If you're not using your music to do that, what the fuck is the point? Just put your guitar back on the stand and bugger off."

As for ultimate goals, both Hannah and James are clearly just ecstatic to be living out a dream that they thought had passed them by. But they hope that they in turn can motivate others.

"I want to inspire someone the way I was inspired as a kid," says Hannah. "What music managed to do for me was pull me out of a small town like Preston and put me in the real world. And if I can do that for somebody else, then that's job done." K!

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Hannah Mee (vocals, guitar), James Shaw (vocals, guitar), Tom Paton (bass), Harry Deller (drums).
WHAT: Fast-rising, genre-mashing guitar pop band from Manchester with an outspoken attitude that's as forward-thinking as it is thoughtful.
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE: In a world that's getting darker, they can offer a guiding light. New music is on the way, as well as the promise of some headline shows.
FOR FANS OF: Waterparks, Stand Atlantic, twenty one pilots, All Time Low.
CHECK OUT: Their fired-up latest single, Candy Coated Lie$.
MORE INFO: hotmilk.co.uk

WORDS: TOM SHEPHERD **PHOTOS:** GOBINDER JHITTA

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Eamon Sandwith (vocals, bass), Josh Price (guitar), Matt Boggis (drums).
WHAT: High energy Aussie rock, straight outta the bong shed.
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE: They've already made a huge splash even before their debut full-length emerges later this year.
FOR FANS OF: Amyl And The Sniffers, The Murlocs, Cosmic Psychos.
CHECK OUT: Recent single Identity Theft.
MORE INFO: thechatslovebeer.com

HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020

THE CHATS

Rough and ready, no frills rock'n'roll from Down Under, brimming with charm and personality and acquiring some friends in high places…

Don't call The Chats punk rock. They might play short, sharp blasts of pulsating noise, filled with raw youthful energy and ragged, holler-along hooks, but that, they say, does not make them a punk band.

"Punk rock's not a genre of music, it's more of an attitude," shrugs guitarist Josh Price. "We do have that rebellious attitude I guess, but we're influenced by AC/DC and a lot of other Aussie rock bands like The Saints, The Angels and Radio Birdman. If you had to pick a genre for us to sit in, it's just rock'n'roll. Either that or shed rock."

Ah yes, shed rock – their label of choice based on the structure in which they spent their formative days in their native Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia.

"It was our mate's bong shed and he used to have a couple of pet snakes in there. We had a pool table and the ping pong and everything. We'd play music and have a good time out there," recalls Josh.

> "WE'RE JUST BEING OURSELVES, NOBODY ELSE"
> JOSH PRICE

It was in this shed that they wrote their self-titled debut EP, which was recorded at their high school. They followed this with a second effort, Get This In Ya, in 2017. Their songs dealt with everyday concerns like having parents pilfer your smokes (Mum Stole My Darts), Victoria Bitter (VB Anthem) and running out of cash (Bus Money). Their most recent single Identity Theft, says vocalist and bassist Eamon Sandwith, was inspired by "that episode of Black Mirror where the guy gets caught wanking".

They didn't necessarily seem like a band with a broad international appeal, but that all changed a little over two years ago when they filmed and uploaded a video for the song Smoko, a paean to the great Aussie labour tradition of the cigarette break. The hilarious homemade clip cost them just $4 – the cost of the sausage roll that Josh eats in the video – but it went viral overnight, racking up a million views by the time they checked back in on it the next morning.

This led to Australian tours with Queens Of The Stone Age and Iggy Pop, followed by their first forays overseas. This included one particularly memorable aftershow in LA when they toured the U.S. for the first time.

"We texted Josh [Homme] and said, 'Hey, we're playing in LA if you want to come down to the show,'" Josh says. "He said, 'Put me down for plus four' and we thought he might have been bringing his family. I walked out of the green room and there was Josh with Dave Grohl and the guys from the Arctic Monkeys. Dave called me by my nickname, 'Pricey', and I gave him a hug. It was pretty surreal!"

Since then the trio have also battered the UK, playing"stupidly big and mad" sets at Reading and Leeds, and more recently, a lengthy sold-out tour that ended at London's O2 Forum a couple of weeks ago.

So what's the appeal and why are people across the globe latching on to The Chats' decidedly Aussie fare?

"I think it's *because* we're so blatantly Australian," he reckons. "We're not trying to be anything else. We're just being ourselves and I think that's what people like about us. There are some cultural similarities, especially in places like the UK and we're singing about everyday things. Even if the slang's different, it's the stuff that no-one talks about, but everybody *does*. And I think a lot of people can relate to that." ***K!***

WORDS: PAUL TRAVERS **PHOTO:** LUKE HENERY

HOTTEST BANDS OF 2020

LOTUS EATER

The nastiest sound north of the Scottish border, brewed from the depths of depravity and out-there avant-garde influences…

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Jamie McLees (vocals), Douglas Park (guitar), Cameron Humphrey (drums), Craig McCulloch (bass), Jack Dutton (guitar).
WHAT: Gloomy Glaswegian quintet mixing highbrow avant-garde influence and a truckload of brutality.
2020 WILL BE THEIR YEAR BECAUSE: Having smashed All Points East and Bloodstock, Download is next, once their vicious debut LP drops.
FOR FANS OF: Loathe, Code Orange.
CHECK OUT: The sonic savagery of last year's Social Hazard EP.
MORE INFO: Facebook.com/LotusEaterUK

"PEOPLE SAY I LOOK LIKE I WANT TO KILL SOMEBODY…"
JAMIE MCLEES

"Gloom is our home," says Jamie McLees. It's the mantra at the heart of everything for Glaswegian metalcore quintet Lotus Eater. In many senses, their sound straightforwardly matches up: a cocktail of anger, aggression, despair, violence and feral rage.

"We're a gloomy band and Glasgow's a gloomy place," explains their singer. "It's about writing shitey-sounding songs in this shitey place that aren't actually shite. I've been on plenty of nights out where I've seen some dark stuff. It lives up to its reputation."

"Being from Glasgow, there's always that underlying aggression and angst," agrees guitarist Douglas Park. "We are nice people, but when you come from here you need to be streetwise and aware of yourself. You need to know who you are and who you're talking to. It's a city with one of the highest crime rates proportional to population. There's a different aura, a different vibe, to other cities that you can feel."

Beyond that sonic brutality and nihilistic imagery, however, there is a catharsis.

"There's a lot of positivity in Lotus Eater," explains Doug. "We might portray ourselves as dark, sinister and scary, but there's always light at the end of the tunnel. We started out to be an outlet for people. We wanted to create a place they could go, mentally and musically, where they could express what they thought and felt about themselves and the world. We want them to feel at home with it. If anyone feels anything with Lotus Eater, angry or sad or happy, then we've done our job. As long as they're feeling better after."

"People say I always look like I want to kill somebody," deadpans Jamie, "but that's just my face!"

Named, cuttingly, after the 'Lotophagi' from Greek Mythology, however – a race of people known to live in narcotically-induced apathy towards the tribulations of the world around them – these are not your everyday brutalists. "The Lotus Eater is someone who might spend the day idling in song, enjoying the luxuries of their life. It's an oxymoron, coming from this city with so much aggression and poverty. There's a contrast with our aesthetic and our name that's a bit softer."

That complexity bleeds through in composition, too. Although the bombast of nu-metal (Korn, Linkin Park and Meshuggah are all favourites) is a major influence on their sound, not to mention the broad strains of bone mangling tech-death and grindcore, there is much more avant-garde influence at play, as well. "I listen to a lot of *musique concrète*," Doug expands. "Music like that is bizarre. We like to take it and give it its own melody and rhythms to express the strangeness, and the light within."

Things are only going to get stranger. Building off the base laid by 2019's Social Hazard EP, an album is currently in the works. And having made waves at last year's All Points East (Oli Sykes is a fan) and Bloodstock festivals, and with their Download debut looming, you can count on these lads taking no prisoners. One of the harshest, most provocative and unapologetically abstract acts around right now, they're going to leave a dent on the scene when that record hits.

"If you haven't heard of Lotus Eater yet," Jamie oozes with gruff confidence, "let's just say you're not doing yourself any favours!" *K!*

WORDS: SAM LAW

YUNGBLUD

He's collaborated with everyone from Marshmello to Machine Gun Kelly, and now Dom Harrison – aka Yungblud – is out to change rock music for good…

"We're living in an era where peopie want to be told the truth."

Authenticity is important to Dom Harrison. The Doncaster native, who goes by the moniker Yungblud, is on the cusp of becoming a bona fide star after a 2019 that saw him release his second EP, the underrated youth, work with some of the biggest names in music and establish himself as one of the UK's most exciting and controversial talents.

Despite mainstream success, though, Dom is determined to push against the tide and be true to his artistic vision and the community it's fostered.

"Up until the past few years, you had things like The X-Factor dominating music, and the artists that climate fostered weren't saying anything true, which is why things got sterile," Dom says, speaking to Kerrang! from Los Angeles, where he's been recording new material. "When I was a kid, I was obsessed with the grunge scene and bands like Soundgarden and Nirvana. I look back on that movement and I can see something similar happening now. People have been fed so much shit music, they've gotten sick of it."

> **"YUNGBLUD ISN'T ABOUT ME – IT'S A COMMUNITY"**
> YUNGBLUD

The sterile nature of the music scene as he saw it led Dom to create something truly unique with Yungblud. His music is rooted in rock – the aforementioned grunge scene, and bands including My Chemical Romance and The Clash were important to him growing up – but hip-hop and pop are influences, too. His back catalogue includes everything from the ska-esque ditty that is I Love You, Will You Marry Me to the atmospheric alt-pop of 11 Minutes, a song which was recorded with Halsey and Travis Barker and currently has over 96 million Spotify streams. This broad sound, Dom says, stems from his desire to learn as much as possible about every style of music.

"It's culture," he shrugs. "That's why my music is so varied, and it's also why I collaborate with so many artists. You've got Halsey, who makes pop, Machine Gun Kelly is a rapper, Dan Reynolds of Imagine Dragons is an indie rock artist and Marshmello is in the EDM world. I want to learn from all these people, but I also want to push guitar music to be prevalent in all those scenes. The guitar means a lot to me."

Yungblud's current success is proof, Dom argues, that the guitar, and rock music more broadly, can never die, no matter how hard the mainstream turns its back. Rock may have changed – "Yungblud is a different take on it," he admits – but its core values of rebellion and community remain vital. It's an outlook Dom will take to the stage of the Kentish Town Forum in London across a five-date residency this summer, while he also assures that his "massive plans" for 2020 include another record, high-profile festival slots and more collaborations.

Just as important as the music of Yungblud, though, is the message. Dom has courted plenty of controversy throughout his time in the spotlight, receiving death threats for his outspoken political views and gender-fluid dress sense, but he won't be bullied into toning things down. The ambition for Yungblud, he outlines, is to take the project to stadiums and create gigantic safe spaces where all feel welcome.

"I want to take this to the biggest rooms and make everyone present feel like they belong, because all I've ever wanted is to belong somewhere," he explains. "I see myself in these people – that was me at a My Chemical Romance concert. I used to think it wasn't alright for me to be who I am, and I got so low that I contemplated suicide. I never want anyone to go through what I did."

Ultimately, whilst his own experiences drove Dom to create Yungblud, it's the legions of fans who've responded to it that have propelled his message forwards. And it is their stories he wants to amplify.

"So many fans have directly inspired my music," he concludes. "A girl in Holland left home, shaved her head and went to art school. I saw two boys snogging in the middle of the mosh pit, because it was the only place they felt safe. A young trans girl I met last year said that my song Kill Somebody allowed her parents to understand why she wanted to go through a gender transition. That's real shit, and that's what I do this for. Yungblud isn't about me – it's a community. It's us." ***K!***

GET TO KNOW

WHO: Dom Harrison (vocals, guitar).
WHAT: A 21st century rock star in the making, who, in just three years, has gone from a stage school drop-out to one of the hottest properties in alternative music.
2020 WILL BE HIS YEAR BECAUSE: Yungblud is an artist for the here and now. Dom's music is spearheading a forward-thinking, genre-defying, socially-conscious movement that's destined for the biggest stages.
FOR FANS OF: grandson, twenty one pilots, My Chemical Romance.
CHECK OUT: original me, a deceptively heavy alt-pop rager featuring a cameo from Imagine Dragons' Dan Reynolds.
MORE INFO: yungbludofficial.com

WORDS: JAKE RICHARDSON **PHOTOS:** TOM PALLANT

REVIEWS

KKKKK = CLASSIC **KKKK** = EXCELLENT **KKK** = GOOD **KK** = AVERAGE **K** = POOR

Vukovi: When the make-up brush goes missing, reach for the paint roller

PHOTO: SAMANTHA GUESS

SURVIVING THE FALL

Scottish pop-rockers VUKOVI fight back the demons with a flash flood of blinding light…

Beneath the glittering make-up and blaring sounds, there has always been something troubling the back of Vukovi vocalist Janine Shilstone's mind, an intangible presence quietly tugging on the strings. OCD is a cruel, oft-misunderstood condition that manifests itself in different ways for different people. Hers is thought-action fusion: a series of compulsions driven by empty, internalised threats of punishment and promises of reward. It is an ailment exacerbated by stress, and as the new highs of hype and expectation brought by the band's brilliant, self-titled 2017 debut LP piled up, the singer found herself on the brink.

Fall Better is the dazzling soundtrack to her fight back. Personal adjustments have been made – diagnosis, treatment, long-overdue acceptance and understanding – but these songs aren't misery chronicles. Rather, they're blazing weapons in the battle to take back control of her mind. "I was angry, because I physically wanted to hurt this thing which I couldn't," Janine explains of having dragged herself out, tooth and nail from a suicidal nadir. "Standing up for myself seemed like the next best thing. This album is our therapy."

Even with that dreadful, defiant context, Fall Better blindsides in its sheer unhinged delirium. "Welcome," announces the eerily dystopian automated voice on tech-noir intro 17359. "The content you have selected contains strong language, dark themes and some dirty fucking riffs." It's an unexpected conceptual insert, but no empty promise. First song Violent Minds arrives with one foot in the past and the other stretching towards what's to come, where Hamish Reilly's guitars and synths swirl as Janine channels almost rude levels of attitude. Aura ups the chaos, layering on the rubbery electro before a gargantuan riff sideswipes in two-thirds through, with the unexpected impact of a runaway train.

From grandstanding autobiographical lament C.L.A.U.D.I.A to the breathless 88mph alt-pop of Play With Me Cos I Can Take It, the refusal to stoop to repetition or entertain any shade of lackluster feels like a paradigm shift, fearlessly throwing down the gauntlet to everyone from PVRIS to Enter Shikari and Bring Me The Horizon. There is an organised riot to these songs – abrupt switches and structural swerves; skull-rattling guitars layered on top of pop melodies – that elevates them confidently into a realm all of their own. The production of Bruce Rintoul (Twin Atlantic, Fatherson) is daringly unconventional, too, with Janine's voice often fighting its way out from beneath the maelstrom rather than gliding over the top.

It simply doesn't let up, either. All That Candy comes on with the force of Paramore being covered by Mad Max's Imperator Furiosa and a whole band of mad bastard War Boys wielding flamethrower-guitars from the front of their juggernaut convoy. Elsewhere, meanwhile, I'm Sorry and Where Are You indulge a little more melodramatic introspection, but even they can't resist some cathartic crescendos.

The penultimate track, White Lies, delivers a ponderous, contrasting calm. Stripping back traditional rock instrumentation altogether, Janine's vocals – sly, wounded, ultimately unbowed – are allowed to swim in a sea of synths, before riotous, uncompromising closer Run/Hide cranks the chaos right back up. It's an outrageous final statement that sounds like Crossfaith battling their way through a survival horror, with lyrics hinting at some sort of resolution but guitars set to maim.

That discarnate 'thing' will always haunt Janine's mind. But now, through the singer's healing and growing, and faced with this thrilling battle cry, it's surely beating a chastened retreat. **SAM LAW**

Q&A JANINE SHILSTONE (VOCALS)

Fall Better arrives in the wake of your OCD diagnosis. Is it fair to say this album is about coming to terms with that affliction?

"Lyrically, it feels like it's all about coming to terms with my OCD – just getting my head around it. It's not in every song, but I think the more you listen to the album, the clearer what I'm saying becomes. A lot of things I talk about in music, I simply couldn't talk about in a conversation with another person. There seems to be this safety barrier around song lyrics that allow you to say things which, if you were to write about them in a blog, for instance, would leave you feeling so exposed, and people saying, 'She's crazy!'"

"IF I SAID THESE THINGS IN A BLOG, I'D FEEL EXPOSED"
JANINE SHILSTONE

Is getting it all out like this as simple as catharsis?

"Well, in the lyrics, I'm having a conversation with myself; I'm having a conversation with this thing. It's always going to be there. Some of these songs I wrote when I was in a horrifically bad place, not thinking I'd still be here a few months down the line. But I feel like this album has become a flag for me in my life that reminds me how I've managed to come through it. I hope it can become a flag for other people coming through things, too, be that a person or an illness or anything else. I think it's quite relatable."

What would you like this album to achieve?

"We've already got a really great fanbase. They're an army of misfits! We've always been very unapologetic. But I want to create an environment that reflects that, where people don't feel the need to pretend they're anything that they're not. I find that falseness of online culture so depressing. Hard as it is to achieve, I just want a community of nice people who come to gigs and get that escape from real life. That, and I'd like to sell enough albums to be able to buy a Ferrari!"

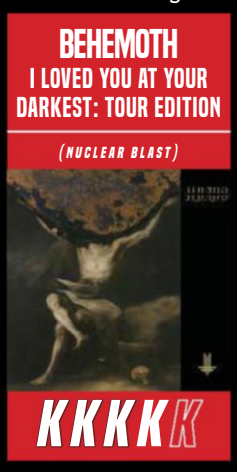
REVIEWS

DANCING IN THE DARK

BEHEMOTH unpack the Devil in the details on expanded re-release

"It's just us," explains the disembodied voice of Behemoth frontman Adam 'Nergal' Darski, as potent monochrome cinematography captures the everyday rumblings of contemporary London. It then cuts to the Polish black metal terrors daubing on their corpse paint in the eerie isolation of the BBC's legendary Maida Vale studios. "It's a dim light. It's something else. It's a third element, so to say…"

So begins the previously-unreleased documentary Thou Darkest Art which, bundled on Blu-Ray, comprises the primary additional content on this deluxe version of Behemoth's game-changing I Loved You At Your Darkest album. Tracking the band across the capital on the album's release on October 5, 2018, we get glimpses of their signing session at Oxford Street's HMV, their art exhibition on Crucifix Lane, and their four-track live session for the Radio 1 Rock Show.



On one hand, those cuts (and the 40-page booklet of stirring alternate artwork by Italian painter and sculptor Nicola Samori) feel like slight additions to an already compelling LP package. Were there no unreleased tracks? Surely Nergal left some witty outtakes to be harvested from the cutting room floor?

Stepping back, however, this offers poignant insight into the band's storied legacy and current hyper-theatrical reinvention. Seeing fan interactions hammers home that this is a cult nearly 30 years in the making, not some recent flash-in-the-pan. Understanding the band's passion and involvement with the artwork, meanwhile, emphasises Nergal's ever-broadening aesthetic ambitions. And seeing them performing away from the fire and dry ice of their regular live show daringly emphasises the compositional excess at the heart of the whole thing.

With that in mind, you're reminded what a record it remains. Having delivered their definitive statement with 2014's post-leukemia masterpiece The Satanist, ILYAYD was a deeper dive into more challenging ideas, complex concepts and bold assertions of artistry. The album title twistedly repurposes a Bible verse, yes, but tracks like God=Dog find them landing defiantly more on-the-nose punches, too. All the while, from Bartzabel to Sabbath Mater, the music is pumped up with an arena-ready bombast that's seen them conquer the enormodomes of America with Slipknot. Now it's the UK's turn.

"It takes a lot to stay creative," explains Nergal, setting impish playfulness aside on one of the most profound moments captured here. "It's so hard, when you're so many years into this process, to reinvent yourself and come up with something that you yourself will be surprised with. It takes everything." It all goes to prove that what Behemoth have become is truly staggering. SAM LAW

CASPIAN
ON CIRCLES
(TRIPLE CROWN)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Blanket, 65daysofstatic, Slow Crush

■ Massachusetts instrumentalists Caspian don't need words to portray intense feeling. Instead, they rely on a blend of intricate guitars and ethereal keys, and it's led to them becoming something of a cult band in post-rock circles. This fifth album – the band's first in over four years – frequently bursts with the impactful emotion now expected from its creators. Wildblood, for example, blossoms from a subdued opening into a glacial epic that's doused in huge melody, while the triumphant Ishmael is an emotionally tense moment that tugs at the heartstrings. There's a slight lull during tamer cuts Division Blues and Onsra, but that's rectified by Collapser, a titanic track with riffs that make it comfortably the heaviest song on show here. There is a rule-breaking vocal display from Pianos Become The Teeth singer Kyle Durfey on Nostalgist, but despite that, here is further proof that Caspian's mastery of their instruments alone can do the talking for them. **JAKE RICHARDSON**

BLASPHEMER
THE SIXTH HOUR
(CANDLELIGHT)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Behemoth, Hate Eternal, The Black Dahlia Murder

■ Italy's Blasphemer have been blaspheming in one incarnation or another for some 30 years, but this latest work of heresy is their finest hour. Dealing in the dirtiest and most aggressive of hard-edged, old school death metal, this is a heady, violent brew with just enough melody to give the pulverising madness a couple of serrated hooks. Opener Let Him Be Crucified hurts very nicely indeed, but it's beyond this that they find their groove, one that's as ugly as it is compulsive. Killer cuts appear in droves, with the manic attack of Lord Of Lies thundering along with the energy of a band a fraction of their age. Elsewhere, The Robe Of Mockery is insidiousness incarnate while also being ruthlessly catchy, and the hulking brute that is The Deposition shifts effortlessly from slow and evil to outright devastation. They're not reinventing any wheels, but Blasphemer are definitely making one to fit their own hideous mold here. **DAN SLESSOR**

OF ALLIES
ARE WE BETTER OFF?
(SELF-RELEASED)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Linkin Park, Biffy Clyro, Deftones

■ When thinking about what they wanted to do on their second album, Yorkshire rockers Of Allies evidently wrote down the word 'anthems' in big letters. Having drawn favourable comparisons to Deftones, Biffy Clyro and Breaking Benjamin, the influence of all three are apparent but never dominate as the band get down to the business of banging out chorus after chorus from the moment first song proper An Echo (Or Nothing) sets the tone. There are many high points that follow, most notably the absolutely enormous Beyond The Wave, which is equal parts chunky and rousing. Then there's the stripped-down, brooding verses and explosive choruses of The Hierophant, while towering closer Goodbye is suitably gargantuan. At 14 tracks, Are We Better Off? is at least three songs too long and would have benefitted from some pruning. But then, it's hard to say which of these promising tunes should have gotten the boot, which is entirely to their credit. **DAN SLESSOR**

WOLF PARADE
THIN MIND
(SUB POP)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Ceremony, Titus Andronicus, Destroyer

■ If you ever wondered what Hunky Dory-era David Bowie might make of our digital addictions if he landed in the present day, Wolf Parade's fifth album should give you a decent idea. As with 2017's Cry Cry Cry, Thin Mind smooths over the jagged energy that originally defined the Montreal band's sound, reaching instead towards '70s art rock. For instance, Out Of Control is a ponderous sojourn through the stars, powered by ethereal synths and guitars echoing into the unknown. Elsewhere, the strangely anthemic Wandering Son may find Dan Boeckner '*staring at the screen until I lost my vision*,' but the paranoia is playfully counterpointed by Julia Take Your Man Home, where his co-frontman Spencer Krug portrays himself as a cartoonish fuck-up '*carving shapes like dicks*' into a bar. Occasionally, Thin Mind lacks the energy to truly achieve lift off, but maturity has given Wolf Parade room to roam. Here, they have created their own space oddity. **JAMES MACKINNON**

MORTIIS
SPIRIT OF REBELLION
(OMNIPRESENCE)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Ministry, Moloch, Wardruna

■ Some 26 years after he released his atmospheric second album Ånden som Gjorde Opprør, Mortiis – Norway's most prolific troll – has written its sequel. Considering he now has released a staggering 12 albums over the course of that time, it's slightly odd to see the one-time Emperor bassist taking something of a backwards look, and this return to his dungeon synth roots after ventures into industrial metal will come as a surprise to some people. With so much potential, then, it's a shame that Spirit Of Rebellion is so incredibly dull. As the title screen for a video game or background music in Games Workshop, it's perfect. As a record, it's lacklustre. The two tracks that make up this opus span more than 25 minutes apiece, and spend much of that time doing not very much at all. Is this a genuine effort to re-engage fans with earlier material, or mere indulgent frivolities from an artist who's grown complacent? The latter, sadly, seems most likely. **ANGELA DAVEY**

OCTOBER DRIFT
FOREVER WHATEVER
(PHYS ED)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Nothing, The Jesus And Mary Chain, My Bloody Valentine

■ This debut album from Somerset quartet October Drift begins with Losing My Touch, a glowering, moody monolith of a track that's immersed in feedback and a subtle-yet-powerful heaviness. The roots of the song – and the whole record – lie in the tortured shoegaze scene of the '90s, but with elements of spiky grunge thrown in here and there. It's a formidable combination that makes songs like Oh The Silence and Cinnamon Girl – not a cover of the Neil Young classic – both powerful and vulnerable at the same time, as fuzzy feedback and driving, determined melodies battle it out with more tender, quiet moments. Elsewhere, the acoustic-leaning Naked is awash with a dark, melancholy loneliness, while album closer The Past is a shimmering, twinkling song of longing that, however full of despair, nevertheless offers up a sense of hope alongside the dour misery. A truly impressive first effort designed to rupture yet also mend broken hearts. **MISCHA PEARLMAN**

VOIDLURKER
INDUSTRIAL NIGHTMARE
(APF)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Electric Wizard, Sleep, Windhand

■ A nightmare yes, an industrial one, no. Rather, Birmingham trio Voidlurker are firmly locked in dedicated service to the doomy sounds of the Sabbath City on this debut EP, but amplified through an even more bleak 2020 filter than Tony Iommi could ever have dreamt. Utilising a fuzzy nastiness only previously achieved by Come My Fanatics…-era Electric Wizard, the riffs of the title-track and the superbly-named Jeffrey Doomer are the sort of heavy delights doom disciples endlessly search for, but remain so often elusive. The chuggy mid-section of Rotten Seed, meanwhile, is a beautifully ugly example of perfectly bringing back the heavy riff, but slower – a rolling headbanger of a riff with a stern stink-face planted firmly all over it. This is a dangerously heavy first glimpse at a killer new noise from the British doom underground, and a band already demonstrating enviable skill when it comes to crafting riffs to tear your speakers apart. Know this: Voidlurker are the stuff amp-worshipping nightmares are made of. **NICK RUSKELL**

DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL
THE BEST ONES OF THE BEST ONES
(HIDDEN NOTE)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: The Rocket Summer, American Football, Jimmy Eat World

■ To understand both the emotional and commercial currency that Dashboard Confessional possessed in their early-2000s heyday, you just have to listen to the three tracks here from the band's 2002 MTV Unplugged live album. Because, as frontman Chris Carrabba pours his heart out, the way the crowd pretty much drown out his every word reveals just how deeply his broken-hearted lyrics resonated with his fans. Despite that fervour, they're not actually the greatest versions of those songs, so their inclusion on this career-spanning Best Of is a small misstep. The studio versions of Screaming Infidelities, Hands Down and Vindicated do demonstrate how moving Carrabba's songs can be, but Ghost of A Good Thing and Fever Dreams show the fine line between earnest catharsis and overwrought sentimentality is one he crosses a bit too often. But when Dashboard get it right, damn do they get it right. **MISCHA PEARLMAN**

PHOTO: DAVID BEAN

LIVES

KKKKK = CLASSIC KKKK = EXCELLENT KKK = GOOD KK = AVERAGE K = POOR

BURNING BRIGHT

BURY TOMORROW
+ EMPLOYED TO SERVE, BLOOD YOUTH

ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON

21/12/2019

KKKKK

BURY TOMORROW hold the Black Flame high at celebratory end-of-chapter show

"Music can take us from a place so dark that we're contemplating doing something wasteful, to a place of positivity and light," says Dani Winter-Bates during tonight's encore. "Music undoubtedly saves people's lives." It's a powerful, personal moment from the Bury Tomorrow frontman during an already important show – the biggest of the Southampton quintet's 13-year career in which they play their fifth album, 2018's Black Flame, in its entirety as a sign-off to this era. Dani has, of late, begun stressing the importance of being emotionally honest as a means of moving forward, and as he explains in the dressing room post-show, this will become more of a fixture in future. But here, tonight, seeing these sentiments expressed in person, and received by a fanbase with this sort of connection, brings things into sharp focus.

In keeping with his positive words, this is

PHOTOS: PAUL HARRIES

a gathering about celebration. And with two killer home-grown supports, it's also a showcase of the rude health in which British metal finds itself right now, something highlighted early on by Blood Youth. An occasionally muddy sound does blur some of their more intricate moments, but the Harrogate quartet's set still provides a forceful start, with Keep You Alive showing just how raging and energetic they can be.

For Employed To Serve, tonight doubles as both a big-stage triumph, and a thunderous last stand for drummer Robbie Back, who's stepping down from the Woking warriors after six years. It's a hell of a send-off, too, with Beneath It All from their devastating Eternal Forward Motion album (dedicated to the "fucking snakes and backstabbers" by guitarist Sammy Urwin) confirming that the band's fearsome skill with utter heaviness and aggression continues unabated.

On the back of Black Flame's success, Bury Tomorrow have not only hit new heights, but strengthened even further the bonds between them and their fans, who they clearly value highly. Thus, as they tear into it, things crash into top gear immediately. It's absolute pandemonium from the moment opener No Less Violent announces their arrival. It's a welcome chance to see how far Bury Tomorrow have come since, as Dani recalls, they played to "five people up the road at the Camden Barfly". Where once they showed promise, tonight they proudly display what a superb band they have blossomed into.

Despite all this significance, the Black Flame soon burns out. "Goddamn that's a short album," the frontman acknowledges with a chuckle as Peacekeeper brings the run-through to a finish. But there are plenty of equally powerful moments to follow. Dani's aforementioned words on mental health and the healing power of his craft come by way of introduction to The Grey (VIXI), which becomes absolute pandemonium, while the promise of a new album and appearances at UK festivals in 2020 is equally celebrated. As closer Man On Fire rings out, it's abundantly clear that, rather than being an ultimate peak, Bury Tomorrow's flame looks set to grow only more incandescent from here. JAMES HICKIE

Dani's jeans were grateful to see the end of the tour

Q&A DANI WINTER-BATES (VOCALS)

How has it been for you to revisit Black Flame and the person you were when you made it?

"Black Flame has done more for us than any album ever, certainly internationally, which is fucking great. There are some fans who consider it to be their favourite album we've done. We've grown as human beings since we made the album, and now off we go to the next one."

What can you say about that?

"It's a very different phase in Bury Tomorrow's life. It's more autobiographical than we've ever been. You can be quite anecdotal with the notion of rising together against adversity, which can get a little vague. This new album will be directly about me and the experiences I've had with depreciated mental health in the past few years. The Grey (VIXI) is the first taste of that. It connects with people in a different way, as I've never opened myself up to such a level of vulnerability. It's been really hard."

How important is being open like that to you?

"I think you have an obligation to open yourself up a little bit, because it's a bit negligent to encourage people to discuss their own mental health if I'm not talking about my own. I'm in a good, resilient place now, so am able to talk about it without it having a detrimental effect. The Grey (VIXI) was the perfect time for me to release all that, which I don't think is something I could have done a year ago."

FACE IN THE CROWD

Is this you having a lovely time watching Bury Tomorrow? Well, you've won yourself a setlist! Send a picture of your face and your ticket to Feedback@kerrang.com to claim your loot.

FIGHT MUSIC

STRAY FROM THE PATH bring righteous fury to the UK

PHOTOS: THOMAS BROOKER

■ For a band with songs about punching Nazis and condemning paedophilia in the Catholic Church, New York hardcore quartet Stray From The Path never let things slip into a negative space. Instead, much like on their recent Internal Atomics album, for all the rage at the heart of frontman Drew York's delivery as he charges around the stage, it's the feeling of a community fighting society's ills that fills this venue tonight.

First, though, openers Gideon have a similar power to the headliners, but it's a gradual, cement-mixer type of heaviness that these Alabamans serve up. They're followed by Loathe, who shoot for a more Deftones type of weirdness. This short set might not be enough time to properly appreciate all of their explosion of ideas, but when they hit, they do so hard. Metalcore veterans The Devil Wears Prada then come bearing fruit from their new seventh album, The Act, but the Ohio band's soft-then-loud dynamic has the most impact when it arrives in songs that are a decade or so old.

Stray From The Path might also have been around for almost 20 years now, but the sting in their political anthems has never felt more vicious. Goodnight Alt-Right detonates with pent-up power following a speech from Drew that asserts how "we need a general reform in the way that we treat each other". Elsewhere, Badge & A Bullet, a song about police brutality, turns into a ferocious cover of Killing In The Name by Rage Against The Machine – the band's most obvious forebears. And just as you think they're reached fever pitch, Architects' Sam Carter joins the band for an electric First World Problem Child. It caps a night fuelled by intensity, but also positivity, togetherness and a point-blank refusal to give up the fight. TOM SHEPHERD

STRAY FROM THE PATH
+ THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA, LOATHE, GIDEON

02 ACADEMY ISLINGTON, LONDON

06/12/2019

KKKKK

Alien abduction came at a bad time for Tom Williams

Drew York really didn't want to get his new trainers mucky

DEVIN TOWNSEND

+ HAKEN

ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON 12/12/2019

KKKKK

Hevy Devy channels hope through mind-melting prog

■ "The whole idea of this show was to make something beautiful," says Devin Townsend, after admitting his latest album, Empath, came during his own mid-life crisis. "The UK has some of the highest levels of depression, but the fact you're all here shows we made it this far." Tonight, the Canadian genre-hopper promises a "two-hour reprieve from all the bullshit" – explicitly "the divisiveness and horror we've been constantly bombarded by". Indeed, by the time he gets to Lucky Animals towards the end of the set, he's staring out to a sea of smiles and jazz hands. Openers Haken deliver a decent half-hour of Dream Theater worship, though on cold, rainy nights like this only someone as charismatic as Hevy Devy can elevate a room to euphoria. He does so with the help of some friends, including Casualties Of Cool collaborator Ché Aimee Dorval, whose voice almost steals the show on Gato, Heaven Send and a surprise, brilliant cover of Disco Inferno. Though less of a visual carnival than his career-defining Retinal Circus show recorded here in 2012, tonight feels infinitely more personal and cerebral – Devin navigating a maze of ambient interludes and oceanic heaviness in the way that only he truly can. AMIT SHARMA

MOTIONLESS IN WHITE

+ SKOLD, DEFYING DECAY

O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN, LONDON 12/12/2019

KKKKK

Spooky Pennsylvania metallers gradually hex London

■ From a stage shrouded in fog, Motionless In White frontman Chris Motionless cuts a striking figure. However, at moments tonight, it feels like the goth-metal crew are more about cutting familiar shapes than delivering a truly knockout blow. They arrive onstage after the messy enthusiasm of Thailand metalcore gang Defying Decay and the steely precision of industrial aliens Skold, delivering a set that can be neatly cleaved into two halves. The first portion feels strangely anaesthetised, as though the band are retreading an old story. Chris bangs his head like a zombie during Rats, while the evil stomp of Brand New Numb feels more like a familiar horror sequel than something viscerally dark. But as the night goes on, the songs begin to show greater signs of life. Synthetic Love demonstrates the sense of dark, creeping drama that this band can deliver so well when they hit their stride, while the live debut of Another Life – taken from 2019's Disguise album – provides a cooler, more defined moment to a set that's front-loaded with fiery chugs. By the spirited encore of Eternally Yours, the resurrection feels complete, ending a night where the haunted thrills eventually win out. TOM SHEPHERD

So, where's this bridge, then?

ALTER BRIDGE

+ SHINEDOWN, THE RAVEN AGE

ARENA, MANCHESTER 15/12/2019

KKKKK

Florida's rock powerhouse play an arena show the way it's meant to be

■ Alter Bridge are one of the last great arena rock bands. It's one thing to play big places, but the Floridians remain one of a select subset of bands that not only can sell out these sheds, but who look and sound like they were simply born to be nowhere else.

Stepping in as replacements for Sevendust, The Raven Age certainly have similar aspirations to the headliners, but they're still searching for that last spark to truly ignite their metal mini-epics. Shinedown, meanwhile, are entirely effective in getting this audience fired up. Taking in T-shirt cannons and Oasis covers among their own shiny anthems, though, there's a definite sense of style over substance to their bombastic and meticulously choreographed approach.

Alter Bridge are an entirely different proposition, however. Everything about them just feels natural and comfortable here, with nothing seeming like they're reading from The Big Rock Gig Instruction Manual. They *do* have a big show, with big segmented screens, swirling lights and columns of dry ice, but it never overshadows the human performance, and you get the feeling that they could play beneath a couple of bare bulbs and still be entirely engrossing.

Myles Kennedy is one of the finest rock vocalists of the modern era, for a start. Guitarist Mark Tremonti proves no slouch himself when he takes the lead on Forever Falling and the pair intertwine their guitar parts in sublime fashion. Elsewhere, there's the emotional heft of an acoustic In Loving Memory that stretches its wings and takes flight into Blackbird, while the anthemic Open Your Eyes and the riff-heavy clatter of Metalingus stylishy show how weighty this band can be.

It all makes for a satisfyingly classy mix – one that brings a sense of closeness to even the biggest moments. And few bands right now do that better. PAUL TRAVERS

PHOTOS: TOM MARTIN

Myles Kennedy gets in some mid-show cricket umpiring

GIG GUIDE

JANUARY BLUES

LAMB OF GOD's MARK MORTON will be more headswaying than headbanging on solo UK acoustic tour…

Q&A MARK MORTON (GUITAR)

You first did an acoustic show at Download Festival 2019. Did that lay the foundation for this UK tour?
"It really did, absolutely. I only did two acoustic shows last year – one at Download, and then a second one in the States. I was pleasantly anxious about doing it, because I hadn't ever done anything like that before with the solo project, and I didn't know what to expect. So we just dived straight into it, and it ended up going over really well, which was awesome."

How will you build the setlists? Do all the songs translate into an acoustic setting?
"I'm still figuring out the setlist and the sequence and that kinda thing. That will probably get decided on the day of the shows. We're not going to do every song off [debut solo album] Anesthetic, because they don't all lend themselves to the acoustic environment. But we're going to fill the set out, and we're going to pick the ones that do. We're also going to add some covers, and we're working on new music, too, so I will probably be debuting some new songs at these shows as well. There's not going to be much of a disconnect, so I think it will be casual, and a nice chilled vibe. It's not going to be me separated from the audience, it'll have a cosy, cool feel."

There's nowhere to hide with an acoustic set, is there?
"Yeah, it's going to be super close-quarters. Hopefully we'll get some interaction between the crowd and us, and I'll be hanging around after the shows. I love the opportunity to play these songs and stretch out a little bit creatively. And I love playing with Joe [Harvatt, guitar] and Mark [Morales, vocals], so it will be a lot of fun to get over to the UK and do that. This will be a nice warm up before going back into Lamb Of God mode."

> **"THESE SHOWS WILL HAVE A COSY, COOL FEEL TO THEM…"**
> MARK MORTON

These shows must be nice for the neck muscles as well, as you won't be headbanging as hard…
"Yeah! It's a little more mellow and a little bit easier on the body, but it's going to be a lot of fun. With the time of the year and the time of the season, I just think it will be something different for people. It's going to be so chilled."

Are you happy with how things have gone since the release of your first solo album, then?
"Yeah, man. It's funny, I was talking to some of my team about how this tour is happening right around a year since we've dropped [first single] The Truth Is Dead. It's just been astounding, man, it's been a really special time. The reception to the whole album was great, and it was really amazing how special Cross Off [featuring Chester Bennington] was to Linkin Park fans. I feel very grateful to get to work with everyone I did on the album. It was a solo album, but it was collaborative, and I'm a fan of everyone who played on it. There were so many great artists involved in putting it together, it was just such a joy to do. I'm working on some new solo material, and there's some exciting new Lamb Of God stuff coming out, so there's a lot of cool things going on. I've got a lot of music in my life, and I'm thrilled to have a chance to do it all. I didn't know how I would be accepted outside of Lamb Of God, to be honest. I didn't know what to expect out on my own as a side project, but the response has been overwhelming, and I'm so lucky to have great fans and great people around me, who are willing to be open-minded. It means so much to me."

DATES

BRISTOL Thekla January 8, **MANCHESTER** Academy 3 9, **GLASGOW** SWG3 10, **BIRMINGHAM** O2 Academy 2 11, **LONDON** Camden Underworld 12. Support: Dave McPherson

WORDS: JAMES HINGLE PHOTO: JENN FIVE

NOW BOOKING

☆ = JUST ANNOUNCED

2000TREES Line-up: Jimmy Eat World. Cheltenham Upcote Farm, July 9-11.

3TEETH Nottingham Rescue Rooms February 1, Glasgow Cathouse 2, Manchester Rebellion 3, Leeds Key Club 4, Bristol Thekla 5, London Heaven 6.

5 SECONDS OF SUMMER Dublin 3Arena May 11, Belfast SSE Arena 12, London SSE Arena Wembley 14, Leeds First Direct Arena 15, Birmingham Arena 16, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 18, Glasgow SSE Hydro 20, Liverpool M&S Bank Arena 21.

AEROSMITH London The O2 July 15, Manchester Arena 18.

AFTER THE BURIAL Bristol Exchange March 13, Glasgow Cathouse 14, Leeds Key Club 15, Manchester Rebellion 16, Birmingham Mama Roux 17, London Camden Underworld. Support: Make The Suffer, Polar, Spiritbox.

ALCEST Manchester Gorilla March 5, Bristol Fleece 6. Support: Birds In Row, Kzelan Mikla.

ARCTANGENT FESTIVAL Line-up: Opeth, TesseracT, This Will Destroy You, Amenra, Ihsahn, Perturbator, Rolo Tomassi, Earthtone9, Giraffes? Giraffes!, Frontierer, GosT, Raketkanon, Quail vs Kenny, Scalping, OHHMS, Svalbard, Alpha Male Tea Party, Stake, Curse These Metal Hands, Boss Keloid, Body Hound, VASA, Luo, BRIQUEVILLE, FES, Tankengine, The K., Mountain Caller. Bristol Fernhill Farm, August 20-22.

ASH Leeds Stylus March 17, O2 Academy Newcastle 18, Glasgow SWG3 TV Studio 20, O2 Ritz Manchester 21, Nottingham Rock City 22, O2 Academy Bristol 24, Portsmouth Pyramids 25, London Camden Roundhouse 27.

BABYMETAL Glasgow Barrowlands February 19, Cardiff Great Hall 20, Manchester Apollo 22, London Eventim Apollo Hammersmith 23. Support: Creeper.

BATUSHKA London Islington Assembly Hall January 10.

BEARTOOTH O2 Academy Bristol February 24, Glasgow SWG3 25, Nottingham Rock City 26, Manchester Academy 28, London Camden Roundhouse 29.

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL Line-up: Judas Priest, Behemoth, Devin Townsend, Philip H. Anselmo & The Illegals, Paradise Lost, Life Of Agony, Diamond Head, Skindred, Vio-Lence, Sacred Reich, Gloryhammer, Jinjer, Butcher Babies, The Black Dahlia Murder, Dark Tranquillity, Conjurer, Saxon, Orange Goblin, The Night Flight Orchestra, Unleash The Archers. Walton-On-Trent Catton Park August 6-9.

THE BOTTOM LINE Liverpool Jimmy's January 8, Stoke Underground 9, Bridgwater Cobblestones 10, Cheltenham Frog & Fiddle 11, Swansea Bunkhouse 12.

BOWLING FOR SOUP O2 Academy Glasgow February 10, O2 Academy Newcastle 11, O2 Academy Birmingham 12, O2 Victoria Warehouse Manchester 13, London O2 Academy Brixton 14, Brighton Centre 15. Support: Simple Plan, Not Ur Girlfrenz.

BRIAN FALLON Norwich Waterfront May 15, Manchester Academy 16, O2 Academy Leeds 17, Glasgow Galvanizers 18, Nottingham Rock City 20, O2 Academy Bristol 21, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 2, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire.

CITY AND COLOUR London Palladium February 28-29.

CHELSEA WOLFE Manchester Stoller Hall March 19, Glasgow Saint Luke's 20, Coventry Cathedral 21, London Alexandra Palace Theatre 22.

CORROSION OF CONFORMITY Dublin Academy April 25, Belfast Limelight2 26, Glasgow Garage 28, Manchester Club Academy 29, Southampton Engine Rooms May 15, O2 Insitute2 Birmingham 16. Support: Spirit Adrift.

COUNTERPARTS Southampton Loft February 10, Bristol Exchange 11, Swansea Sin City 12, Birmingham Mama Roux 13, Nottingham Beta 14, Glasgow G2 15, Newcastle Riverside 16, Norwich Waterfront Studio 17, Manchester Rebellion 18, Leeds Key Club 19, London Tufnell Park Dome 20. Support: Can't Swim, Static Dress.

CROSSFAITH London O2 Academy Islington March 2, Brighton Chalk 3, Norwich Waterfront 4, Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill 6, Newcastle Riverside 7.

DARKEST HOUR Manchester Rebellion January 20, London Underworld 21. Support: Fallujah, Bloodlet, Une Misère, Lowest Creature.

DEATHSTARS London O2 Academy Islington April 29, Manchester Academy3 30, Glasgow G2 May 1, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 2.

DELAIN O2 Institute Birmingham February 6, O2 Ritz Manchester 7, Bristol Anson Rooms 8, London Electric Brixton 9.

DESERTFEST Line-up: Masters Of Reality, Corrosion Of Conformity, Witchcraft, Orange Goblin, Brant Bjork, Pissed Jeans, Conan, Naxatras, Raging Speedhorn, Sacri Monti, Huntsmen, Monarch, Spirit Adrift, Fire Down Below, Grotto, Desert Storm, Morag Tong, The Picturebooks, Green Lung, The Brothers Keg, Black Orchids. London various venues, May 1-3.

DIMMU BORGIR / AMORPHIS London O2 Forum Kentish Town January 22. Support: Wolves In The Throne Room.

DINOSAUR PILE-UP London O2 Forum Kentish Town April 3.

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL Line-up: KISS, Iron Maiden, System Of A Down, Deftones, Disturbed, Korn, The Offspring, Of Mice & Men, Alestorm, Gojira, Black Veil Brides, Daughtry, Airbourne, BABYMETAL, Baroness, Blackout Problems, Bleed From Within, Blues Pills, Bokassa, British Lion, Bush, Cellar Door Moon Crow, Chelsea Grin, Dead Label, Dead Posey, Dying Fetus, Electric Wizard, Killswitch Engage, The Last Internationale, Lit, Lotus Eater, Marianas Trench, Obituary, P.O.D., Periphery, Powerwolf, The Pretty Reckless, PUP, Puppy, Skillet, Stone Broken, Theory, Tiny Moving Parts, Uncured, Volbeat, Wargasm, Wayward Sons, Wednesday 13, The Wildhearts. Donington Park June 12-14.

DREAM THEATER London Hammersmith Apollo February 21-22, Glasgow SEC Armadillo 23.

EMP PERSISTENCE TOUR Line-up: Gorilla Biscuits, Agnostic Front, Street Dogs, H2O, Wisdom In Chains, Billybio, Cutthroat, This Means War. London O2 Forum Kentish Town January 26.

☆ **EMPLOYED TO SERVE** Southampton Joiners March 6, Milton Keynes Craufurd Arms 7, Nottingham Bodega Social Club 8, Birmingham Mama Roux's 9, Glasgow Cathouse 10, Manchester Academy 3 11, London Camden Underworld 12, Newcastle Think Tank 13, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 14. Support: Palm Reader, Cruelty.

EVANESCENCE / WITHIN TEMPTATION London The O2 April 7, Glasgow SSE Hydro 28, Leeds First Direct Arena 30, Birmingham Arena May 1.

EVIL SCARECROW Cardiff Globe February January 12, Glasgow G2 13, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 14, London Camden Electric Ballroom 16. Support: Witch Tripper.

FAITH NO MORE O2 Apollo Manchester June 10, O2 Academy Glasgow 11, O2 Academy Birmingham 15, London O2 Academy Brixton 16-17.

FEEDER Bexhill On Sea De La Warr Pavilion April 16, O2 Academy Bournemouth 17, Cambridge Corn Exchange 18, O2 Academy Bristol 23, O2 Academy Liverpool 24, O2 Academy Leicester 25.

FRANK CARTER & THE RATTLESNAKES Manchester Academy February 12, Glasgow Barrowland 13, London Alexandra Palace 15.

FULL OF HELL Lincoln Jolly Brewer April 8, Newcastle Cluny 2 9, Glasgow Stereo 10, Dublin Grand Social 11, Limerick Siege Of Limerick 12, Manchester Bread Shed 13, Bristol Exchange 14, London Scala 15. Support: Primitive Man, Eye Flys.

GENDER ROLES Glasgow Poetry Club March 26, Newcastle Think Tank 27, Sheffield Network 28, Manchester Yes 31, Bristol Exchange April 1, Birmingham Asylum2 2, London The Dome 3.

THE GHOST INSIDE London O2 Academy Brixton July 4.

GOST London Camden Underworld March 15. Support: Svart Crown.

GUNS N' ROSES London Tottenham Hotspur Stadium May 29 & 30.

HELLA MEGA TOUR Line-up: Green Day, Fall Out Boy, Weezer. Dates: Glasgow Bellahouston Park June 24, London Stadium 26, Huddersfield John Smith's Stadium 27, Dublin RDS Arena 29.

HIGHLY SUSPECT Bristol SWX March 16, London Electric Ballroom 18, O2 Institute Birmingham 19, Glasgow King Tut's 2, Manchester Academy 22.

HOLLYWOOD VAMPIRES Leeds First Direct Arena September 2, Glasgow SSE Hydro 3, London The O2 5, Birmingham Arena 6. Support: Primal Scream.

THE HU Brighton Haunt February 8, O2 Academy Bristol 10, London Camden Electric Ballroom 11, Manchester O2 Ritz 12, Glasgow Garage 14, Belfast Limelight 15, Dublin Academy 16.

INCINERATION FESTIVAL Line-up: Bloodbath, Vomitory, Dark Funeral, Tsjuder, Mgla, Lucifer's Child, Skeletal Remains, Damnation's Hammer, October Tide, Defeated Sanity, Grave Desecrator, Blasphemer. London various venues May 9.

INCITE Bournemouth Anvil January 11, Bridgwater Cobblestones 12, Edinburgh Bannermans 15, Leeds Key Club 16, Manchester Star & Garter 17, Nottingham Alberts 18, Exeter Cavern 19, London O2 Academy2 Islington 20. Support: Sworn Amongst, Death Remains.

INSOMNIUM O2 Academy2 Birmingham January 17, Norwich Waterfront 18, London Islington Assembly Hall 19, Manchester Academy3 20, Limerick Dolan's Warehouse 21, Dublin Whelan's 22, Glasgow Cathouse 23, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 24, Newcastle Riverside 25, Bristol Thekla 26. Support: Conjurer.

THE INTERRUPTERS Cardiff Tramshed January 27, O2 Institute Birmingham 28, O2 Academy Liverpool 29, Glasgow SWG3 31, O2 Academy Leeds February 1, O2 Ritz Manchester 2, O2 Academy Bristol 4, Nottingham Rock City 5, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 7.

I PREVAIL Portsmouth Pyramids Centre March 17, Manchester Academy 18, Glasgow SWG3 19, Dublin Academy 21, Nottingham Rock City 23, O2 Institute Birmingham 24, Leeds Beckett University 26, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 27, O2 Academy Bristol 28.

KNOTFEST Line-up: Slipknot. Milton Keynes National Bowl, August 22.

LA DISPUTE Brighton Chalk April 17, Southampton Boiler Rooms 18, Bristol Fleece 19, Sheffield Leadmill 20, Edinburgh Leadmill 20, Edinburgh Liquid Room 21, Newcastle Riverside 22, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 24, Liverpool Invisible Wind Factory 25.

LAMB OF GOD O2 Academy Bristol April 21, Manchester Academy 22, O2 Academy Glasgow 23, O2 Academy Birmingham 24, London O2 Academy Brixton 25. Support: Kreator, Power Trip.

LINDEMANN London O2 Forum Kentish Town, February 23.

LUCIFER London Camden Underworld May 12.

MACHINE HEAD London O2 Academy Brixton June 5, O2 Academy Birmingham 6.

MARK MORTON Bristol Thekla January 8, Manchester Academy3 9, Glasgow SWG3 10, O2 Academy2 Birmingham 11, London Camden Underworld 12.

THE MENZINGERS Southampton Engine Rooms February 6, Bristol SWX 7, Manchester Albert Hall 8, Dublin Whelan's 10, Glasgow QMU 11, Newcastle Riverside 12, Birmingham Asylum 14, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 15.

MONSTER MAGNET Glasgow Garage January 22, O2 Academy Leeds 23, London O2 Forum Kentish Town 24.

NAPALM DEATH Bournemouth The Old Fire Station February 18, Cardiff Tramshed 19, O2 Institute Birmingham 20, Glasgow Slay 21, London Brixton Electric 23. Support: EyeHateGod, Misery Index, Rotten Sound, Bat.

NEW YEARS DAY Leeds Key Club February 18, Southampton 1865 19, London O2 Academy Islington 21, Manchester Club Academy 22, Glasgow Garage 23, O2 Academy2 Birmingham 25, Bristol Fleece 26.

OZZY OSBOURNE Newcastle Utilitia Arena October 23, SSE Hydro Glasgow 25, London The O2 28, Birmingham Resorts World Arena 31, Manchester Arena November 2, Dublin 3Arena 5, Nottingham Motorpoint Arena 8. Support: Judas Priest.

PALAYE ROYALE Dates: Glasgow Garage February 18, O2 Ritz Manchester 19, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 21, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 23, Bristol SWX 24. Support: Counterfeit.

PARKWAY DRIVE London SSE Arena, Wembley April 18. Support: Hatebreed, Stick To Your Guns, Venom Prison.

PEARL JAM British Summer Time, London Hyde Park July 10. Support: Pixies, White Reaper.

PENGSHUI Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach March 4, Plymouth Junction 5, Bournemouth Anvil 6, Southampton Joiners 7, Brighton Hope & Ruin 9, O2 Academy2 Oxford 10, Milton Keynes Craufurd Arms 11, Birmingham Asylum2 13, Doncaster Vintage Rockbar 14, Manchester Star & Garter 15, Glasgow Garage Attic 17, Newcastle Think Tank? 18, London Boston Music Room 19. Support: Kid Bookie.

PETROL GIRLS Newport Le Pub January 14, Brighton Green Door Store 15, London Oslo 16, Nottingham Rock City 17, Manchester Deaf Institute 18, Glasgow 19, Belfast McHughes 21, Dublin Whelans 22, Limerick Dolan's 23.

POLARIS Bristol Fleece 3 May, O2 Academy2 Birmingham 4, Glasgow G2 5, London O2 Academy Islington 6. Support: Alpha Wolf, Currents, Varials.

PVRIS Glasgow St Luke's February 18, Manchester Gorilla 19, London Electric Brixton 20.

QUEEN & ADAM LAMBERT London The O2 June 2-9, Manchester Arena 11-12, London The O2 17-21.

RAMMSTEIN Cardiff Principality Stadium, June 14, Belfast Boucher Road Playing Fields 17, Coventry Ricoh Arena 20.

RINGS OF SATURN Southampton Joiners February 23, Bristol Exchange 24, Birmingham Mama Roux 25, Manchester Rebellion 26, Glasgow Cathouse 27, Leeds Key Club 28, London Underworld 29. Support: Enterprise Earth, Brand Of Sacrifice, Traitors.

SABATON London SSE Arena, Wembley February 8. Support: Apocalyptica, Amaranthe.

SILVERSTEIN London O2 Academy Islington February 8. Support: Hawthorne Heights.

SISTERS OF MERCY Manchester Albert Hall March 7, O2 Academy Bristol 8, O2 Academy Leeds 10, Nottingham Rock City 11.

SLAM DUNK FESTIVAL Line-up: Don Broco, The Wonder Years, Mayday Parade, Four Year Strong, Knuckle Puck, Bayside, Issues, Motion City Soundtrack, Hands Like Houses, Ice Nine Kills, State Champs, Sum 41, The Used, Billy Talent, Basement, We Are The In Crowd, The Story So Far, Your Demise, Grayscale, Refused, Comeback Kid, Young Guns, Movements, Free Throw, Deez Nuts, Fit For A King, Reel Big Fish, The Vandals, Face To Face, Mom Jeans,Bedouin Soundclash. Leeds Temple Newsam Park May 23, Hatfield Park 24.

SLIPKNOT Dublin 3Arena January 14, Manchester Arena 16, Newcastle Utilita Arena 17, SSE Hyro Glasgow 18, Sheffield FlyDSA Arena 20, Nottingham Motorpoint Arena 21, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena 22, Birmingham Arena 24, London The O2 25. Support: Behemoth.

STEEL PANTHER O2 Academy Bristol February 5, London O2 Academy Brixton 7, O2 Academy Birmingham 8, O2 Warehouse Manchester 9, O2 Academy Glasgow 11, O2 Academy Newcastle 12, Belfast Ulster Hall 15, Dublin Vicar Street 16.

TEDDY ROCKS FESTIVAL Line-up: The Amazons, The Fratellis. Charisworth Farm, Dorset, May 1-3.

THERAPY? O2 Ritz Manchester April 3, London Camden Electric Ballroom 4.

TURNOVER Southampton Loft March 6, Norwich Waterfront 8, Glasgow Garage 9, Manchester Gorilla 10, O2 Institute2 Birmingham 11, London Electric Brixton 13.

TWIN ATLANTIC Motherwell Concert Hall March 3, Aberdeen Music Hall 4, Dundee Fat Sams 6, Kilmarnock Grand Hall 7, Newcastle Riverside 9, Manchester Academy2 10, Sheffield Leadmill 11, Cardiff Tramshed 13, O2 Academy Oxford 14, O2 Academy Leicester 15, Bournemouth Old Firestation 17, Brighton Concorde2 18, London Camden Electric Ballroom 20.

UNEARTH London ULU February 15. Support: Prong, Dust Bolt.

VADER London Camden Underworld March 9. Support: Defiled, Chronosphere, Fallcie.

WAGE WAR Nottingham Rescue Rooms January 8, Manchester Rebellion 10, Dublin Academy Green Room 11, Glasgow G2 12, Newcastle Think Tank 13, Leeds The Key Club 15, O2 Institute Birmingham 16, London O2 Academy Islington 17, Southampton The Loft 18.

WATERPARKS Dublin Academy January 24, Belfast Waterfront Studio 25, Glasgow SWG3 26, Birmingham Institute 27, Manchester Academy2 29, London Electric Ballroom February 1-2.

WHILE SHE SLEEPS London O2 Academy Brixton January 24, Manchester Academy 26. Support: Every Time I Die, Vein.

WHITECHAPEL O2 Academy2 Oxford April 24, Leeds Key Club 25, Manchester Rebellion 26, Colchester Arts Club 28, Stoke Sugarmill 29, Glasgow SWG3 30, Bristol Thekla May 1, Wolverhampton KK's Steel Mill 2, London Scala 3.

WILLIAM DUVALL Dublin Whelans March 25, Glasgow King Tut's 27, O2 Academy2 Newcastle 28, Liverpool Arts Loft 29, O2 Academy3 Birmingham 31, London 100 Club April 1.

YONAKA Belfast Voodoo February 5, Dublin Grand Social 6, Limerick Dolan's 7.

YOUR DEMISE London Underworld April 5.

SLAM DUNK FESTIVAL

Latest additions: Bury Tomorrow, We Came As Romans, Stray From The Path, Dance Gavin Dance, Polaris, Trash Boat, The Faim, Normandie, Days N' Daze, Zebrahead.

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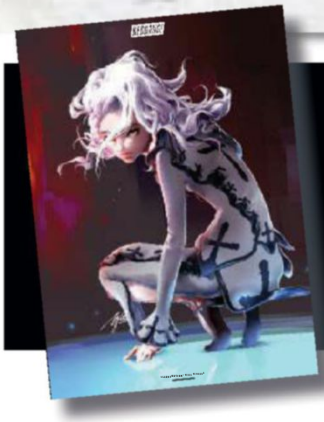
Bartender says commemorative **SLAYER** cocktail is "90 per cent blood", shortly before arrest

Fan "definitely" going to watch hour of gig footage recorded on their phone at unspecified time

WORDS: SIMON YOUNG

THE INSIDE STORY OF THE ALBUM WE *NEVER* THOUGHT WE'D HEAR... ONLY IN

NEXT WEEK'S KERRANG!, ON SALE JANUARY 15



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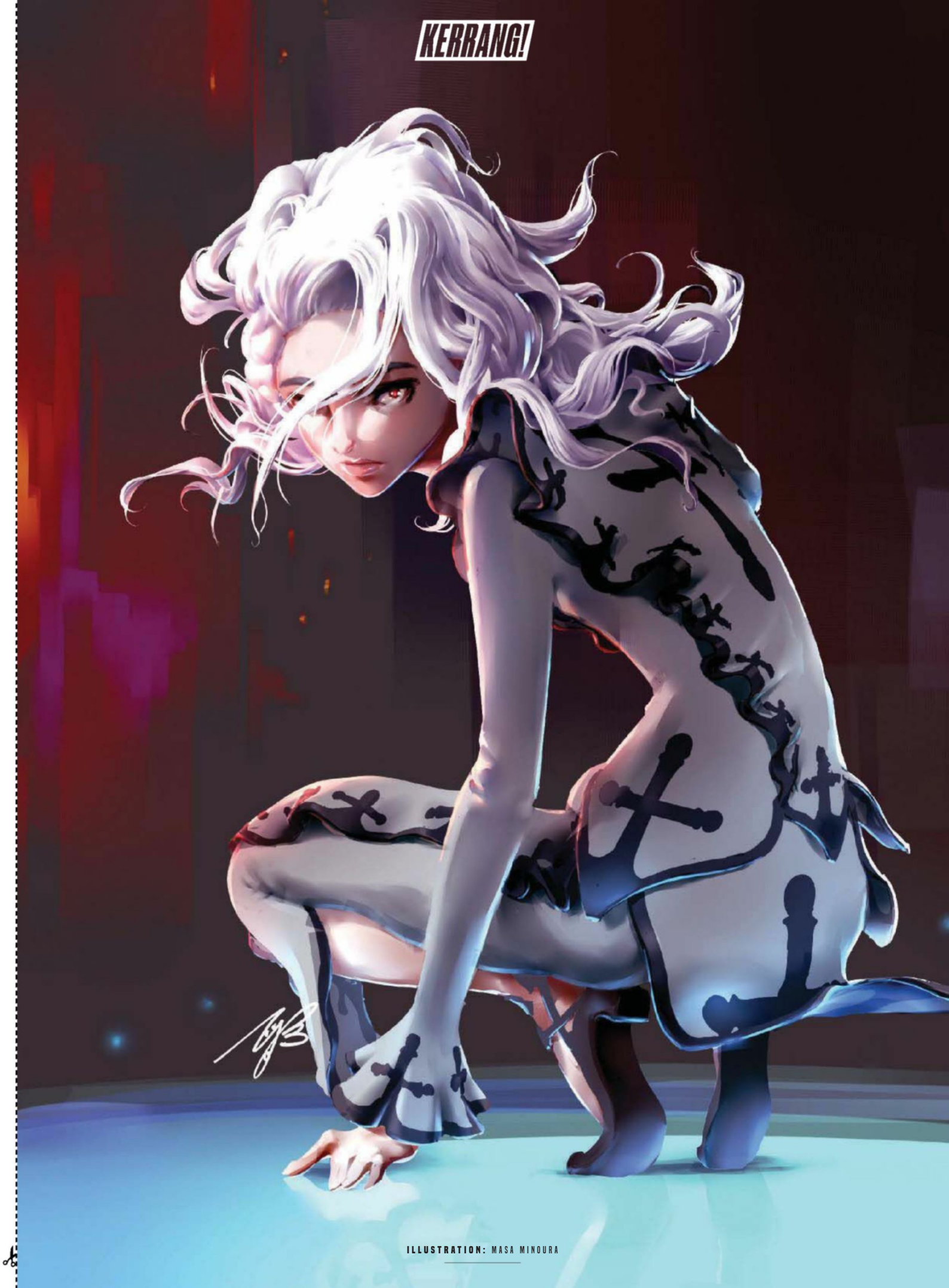

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